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"Politics, Ballyhoo, and Controversy": The Allied Clandestine Services, Resistance, and the Rivalries in Occupied France

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“Politics, Ballyhoo, and Controversy”: The Allied Clandestine Services, Resistance, and the Rivalries in Occupied France

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**History Departmental Undergraduate Honors Thesis
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Song of the Partisans
By Maurice Druon

Friend, can you hear
The Flight of the ravens
Over our plains?

Friend, can you hear
The muffled cry of our country
In chains?

Ah! Partisans,
Workers and peasants,
The alert has sounded.

This evening the enemy
Will learn the price of blood
And of tears.¹

¹ Claude Chambard, *The Maquis: A History of the French Resistance Movement* (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc. , 1976), vii.

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Abstract

Many popular conceptions of World War II portray irreconcilable dichotomies such as democracy and fascism, Allies and Axis Powers, or victims and aggressors. However, due to alliances and entanglements that occurred years before the first shots were fired in anger, traditional historiography has demonstrated that the divisions between belligerents and internal to the allies were far more convoluted. In France, the reality was that the nation was neither united in their goal of liberation nor in their politics before the Germans invaded on 10 May 1940. Consequently, inclinations to resistance or collaboration were evident in the deeply divided political atmosphere of France in the 1930s, and persisted into the war years, thus creating a perplexing environment for the Allies to liberate. As this thesis will demonstrate, even the Resistance was deeply divided between the conservative (but not fascist) Gaullists and the Communists, between those who resisted from within France and those who organized resistance from outside, and between those whose first objective was the liberation of France and those whose primary objective was the political transformation of post-war France. By examining the many divisions within the Resistance and the concurrent development of the Allied clandestine services, this thesis will also illustrate the many different obstacles that stood between the Allies and their goal of exploiting the Resistance in advance of Operation Overlord. The result of this examination will be to demonstrate that the Allied clandestine services' concerted effort to work with the Maquis over their Free French and Communist counterparts was the best decision based on both the Allied strategy and the stability of France after its liberation.

Introduction

“What is most striking about the French under the occupation is not how heroic or villainous they were but how imaginative, creative and resourceful they were in pursuit of a better life.”²

*-Robert Gildea, author of *Marianne in Chains: Daily Life in the Heart of France During the German Occupation**

During World War II, France was occupied by one of history’s most brutal militaries and led by a collaborationist government that replicated the brutality of the Nazis in order to maintain power within their own borders. Despite this, those willing to resist the occupation were always a minority, and those who made pleasantries with the Germans in order to maintain a sense of normalcy and security were rarely true collaborators. Consequently, the belief popularized in the 1970s that “France was a nation of collaborators who stood by indifferently as tens of thousands of Jews were deported to Nazi death camps” did not reflect the reality of the times.³ Instead, while there were indeed collaborators who sought to appease their masters and expose the Resistance, the majority of France recognized that they could not simultaneously defeat the Germans while overthrowing Vichy, so they did what was necessary to preserve their way of life and that of their families and communities.

Likewise, the legacy of the Resistance specifically, and France in general, belies the myth fostered by Charles de Gaulle in the summer of 1944: that of a France united in the cause of liberation. Indeed the reality in France after their surrender in 1940 was a sense of shock that anesthetized most French men and women to concerns outside of their villages. Therefore, the increasingly dire food shortages and demand for work made it so that those who partook in bold

² Alan Riding, "Survivors, Not Heroes or Villains, In Occupied France." *The New York Times*, August 13, 2003, Books of the Times section.

³ Ibid.

acts of collaboration or resistance merely brought further stress on their communities while rarely improving their lot in life.

As for those who chose to resist, there was no point in seeking victory over only one of their enemies. After all, to overthrow Vichy would mean that the Nazis would just install a more brutal regime in their place, and it was impossible to overthrow the Nazis while leaving their collaborationist government in place. As a consequence, it was realized that by harassing all targets of opportunity, be they German or Vichy personnel or infrastructure, the Resistance hoped to simultaneously impact the daily operations of the Nazis while delegitimizing Vichy by making it obvious that they were not supported.

By first describing Rod Kedward's, Julian Jackson's, and Ian Ousby's scholarship on the pre-war political atmosphere of France, this thesis will reveal the partisanship that would persist through the war and answer why the Resistance never truly unified. Furthermore, this thesis will attempt to answer what the Allied clandestine services sought to accomplish through the description of their respective formations, missions, and goals to be accomplished through their work with the Resistance, as well as the unique personnel selected for such missions. Lastly, this thesis seeks to answer the question of how the Allied clandestine services sought to limit the discord within France while maximizing the effects of the Resistance in advance of the Allied invasion of Normandy. By doing so, it will become clear why the Maquis Resistance fighters were the Allies' answer to accomplishing such a daunting task while ensuring the stability of the post-war French state.

Corroboration of this investigation's claims will come through the analysis of primary sources written by political leaders, members of the Allied clandestine services, and participants in various Resistance groups. By the end, this thesis will demonstrate that the Nazi occupation

was not the magical ointment that would cure internal divisions and unite France against a common enemy because the rifts within France that had existed before the war also persisted through it, thus creating obstacles that the Allied clandestine services had to address before Operation Overlord. As a consequence, this thesis will determine that the Allies saw that by working with the Maquisards, they could limit the difficulties of partisanship that characterized France long before the war had even begun, and by doing so, impact the battlefield in ways never anticipated by the conventional forces they were in support of.

Chapter 1: **Impending War, the fall of France, and the Foundations of the Resistance**

“Pétain spoke of the ‘magnificent resistance of the army’ against an enemy ‘superior in number and in arms.’ De Gaulle declared that it was the enemy’s mechanized forces on the ground and the air, and the tactics of the Germans, ‘far more than the fact that we were outnumbered’ that provide the element of surprise and ‘forced our armies to retreat’.”⁴

Until the mid-1930s, pacifism was a philosophy shared by many French citizens, often inspired by personal experience in the Great War. That war trespassed into the lives of everyone, whether it was the hundreds of thousands of wounds still visible on France’s citizens, the ruins in northern France, or the memorials that were focal points in nearly every Town Square and village. Demonstrative of this inability to forget was Jean Giono, who was gassed and nearly blinded in 1918. In 1934 he wrote, “I cannot forget the war. I would like to. I might pass two or three days...and then I undergo it again. And I feel frightened...in the war I was afraid, I am still afraid, I tremble... I prefer to think about my own happiness. I do not want to sacrifice myself.” Indeed, the brutality of his experience meant that the concept of nationalism escaped him: “There is no glory in being French. There is only one glory: to be alive.”⁵

However, with Hitler’s rise to power next door, leftist pacifists began to reconsider their position. A response to Hitler’s reoccupation of the Rhineland in 1936 therefore became the most pressing issue of the Popular Front, an alliance of left-wing movements consisting of the French Communist Party, the Radical and Socialist Party, and the French Section of the Workers’ International. By seeing both war and fascism as equally malevolent, the paradox of

⁴ Rod Kedward, *La Vie en Bleu: France and the French since 1900* (London: Penguin Books, 2005), 243.

⁵ Julian Jackson, *France: The Dark Years 1940-1944* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 85, 87.

preventing the latter with the former was confronted differently by the different factions of the left. The Communists saw no dilemma at all; as the most politically motivated, they believed that if the only way to stop Hitler was another brutal war, then so be it. Nor was there a dilemma for the most devoted pacifists: war was never an acceptable solution. However, for the majority of the Popular Front, the answer was not as easy to agree upon.

Léon Blum, the leader of the Popular Front government, had his convictions tested with the occurrence of the Spanish Civil War; should France intervene in order to stop the rise of a Fascist government on both the western and eastern borders? Again, the Communists favored intervention, while the majority of the Socialists and Radicals opposed it, and again, from 1938 on, France was forced to consider the choices “between war and peace, [as] anti-fascism and pacifism threatened to explode into open conflict on the left.” As the debates raged inside the borders of France, Hitler began his move against Czechoslovakia, and despite efforts to bond France with a proposed National Unity government to bridge the political divides of France, the politics were too fractured for such an idea as the right was as divided as the left over foreign policy.⁶

Meanwhile, as France debated its response to a growing threat, Germany wasted no time unifying, as it looked both inward and outside its borders for inspiration. Part of the process of garnering support from within was the justification that its increasing militarization was in response to its attempted destruction by the allies after their surrender in 1918. Similarly, just as it produced an “us vs. them” outlook with its foreign policy, the German government used such tactics domestically against those they sought to scapegoat for Germany’s past failures. With this in mind, minorities were targeted in earnest, as the enactment of laws curtailing Jewish businesses and their lifestyle, first introduced in 1933 and intensifying thereafter to culminate in

⁶ Ibid., 88-9.

the pogroms of November of 1938, and authorized by Adolf Hitler himself. As word of such persecution spread across Europe, resentment increased towards the Jewish communities, culminating after the assassination of a German Embassy official in Paris by a Jewish youth on November 7, which gave the Nazis a perfect excuse to institute further restrictions on its Jewish populace. The assassination resulted in what has become known as *Kristallnacht*, or “Night of Broken Glass.” For two days, mobs in Germany and Austria freely attacked Jews in the streets, homes, and at their places of employment and worship resulting in the death of ninety six Jews, the burning of over one thousand synagogues, the destruction of approximately 7,500 Jewish businesses, the vandalizing of countless cemeteries and schools, and thirty thousand Jewish citizens arrested and sent to concentration camps.⁷

The pogrom of November 1938 forever changed the identity of German Jewry. For Victor Klemperer, it started with the deliberate search of his house for weapons, which resulted in the confiscation of his saber, thus reversing his war record in the Great War from a point of pride to a liability that almost led to his arrest. Shortly after, news spread of concentration camps, and Klemperer’s driver’s license was revoked. At the same time, neighbors no longer dignified his existence as he walked by, and reports of Jews committing suicide as a final act of desperation as well as mobs pillaging Jewish neighborhoods became commonplace. Standing steadfast in the face of growing tyranny, Klemperer wrote:

Until 1933...the German Jews were entirely German and nothing else [and the] anti-Semitism which was always present is not at all evidence to the contrary [since] the friction between Jews and Aryans was not half as great as that between Protestants and Catholics...employers and employees...East Prussians...and southern Bavarians.⁸

⁷ Judith Pearson, *The Wolves at the Door: The True Story of America's Greatest Female Spy* (Guilford, CT: The Lyons Press, 2008), 39-40.

⁸ Omer Bartov, *Germany's War and the Holocaust: Disputed Histories* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 208.

The atrocities of *Kristallnacht* and alienation of Jews in Germany caused an influx of Jewish immigrants seeking refuge in France, however, due to the poor economic state of the country at the time, jobs were limited for foreigners, and due to preexisting distaste for the German-speaking immigrants due to World War I, widespread anti-Semitic feelings from the French populace became the norm. In little time, the French motto of “liberté, égalité, fraternité” gave way to tyranny, intolerance, and hatred as unemployment and poverty caused further ill-will towards the three-million immigrants living on French soil in the late 30s. Even the newspapers demonstrated this resentment, as headlines such as “German Jews clutter up French streets, telling us to fight on their behalf” became more and more frequent.⁹ Despite these troubled experiences in France, the immigrants were still grateful to have escaped the increasing grip of Nazi Germany, a grip that would soon look outside its borders.

France’s Initiative becomes outdated: The Maginot Line

“You take Hitler for another Wilhelm I, the old gentleman who seized Alsace-Lorraine from us, and that was all there was to it. But Hitler is Genghis Khan.”
Paul Reynaud, 12 June 1940¹⁰

While the internal debates of France’s position in the face of war continued, the Nazis on the other hand moved forward with their military buildup and increasing unity. The Socialists and trade unionists in France argued that any militarization, even in the form of defense, would only benefit internal fascists, which stood in direct defiance of their own political goals. However, in December of 1938, Léon Blum’s decision following Germany’s annexation of Austria to make a stand against Hitler’s advancement was supported by the Socialist party

⁹ Pearson, *The Wolves at the Door: The True Story of America's Greatest Female Spy*, 40.

¹⁰ Ian Ousby, *Occupation: the Ordeal of France 1940-1944* (London: Pimlico, 1997), 20.

congress, while the leader of the pacifist movement, Paul Faure, remained as the Popular Front's secretary-general since his position was too popular to be discounted entirely.

As for the conservative opinion, the enemy was within France's own borders according to the most extreme opinions held by the nationalist groups Action Française and the Croix-de-Feu. "There was little change in their imagined nation during the late 1930s, except in intensity: their anti-Communism was even more rife, and the continued appetite for anti-Semitism fed avidly on the 'threat' perceived in the influx of refugees fleeing from persecution." Further radicalizing the conservatives' stance was the rise of the Popular Front, and so rabid was the anti-communist stance of the nationalists that the danger of Nazi Germany was merely a side note to their perceived threats within France. With this political rift on the home front, France broke from traditional political norms when it became understood that Communists desired a strong national defense while conservatives argued for cooperation and diplomacy.¹¹

Despite the debate on the home front, the progression of an extensive defense that started in 1929 benefited both sides of the aisle since war was not ideal for either and a strong defense helped mitigate the prospect of war. As such, any military strategy or foreign policy that destabilized the potential for continued peace was immediately rejected; both leaders and citizens alike agreed on a plan that "provided a bedrock of defensive constructions which allowed peace groups to attract support from those who might otherwise have been worried about national security;" this defensive position would be known as the Maginot Line.¹²

Named after André Maginot, the Minister of War before dying of typhoid in 1932, the Maginot Line was a defensive position built along the border that France shared with Germany.

¹¹ Kedward. *La Vie en Bleu: France and the French since 1900*, 224-6.

¹² *Ibid.*, 226.

Breaking ground in 1929, it was built to prepare for a frontal attack akin to the tactics France had seen in World War I, incorporating a comprehensive obstacle plan, reinforced bunker systems, and mutually supported firing positions of various weaponry ranging from heavy artillery to machine guns. As opposed to the vivid images of savagery in the rat infested trenches of World War I, the Maginot Line's four hundred concrete bunkers housed comparatively lavish luxuries such as shelving, carpeting, upholstered furniture, and electricity. Standing in stark contrast to the memories of the brutality of the previous war brought about by the sight of over one million wounded veterans still alive, and the seven-hundred thousand war widows, the Maginot Line was shown off as France's dedication to peace to everyone who toured the elaborate array of tunnels and to those that observed (in newspapers across the world) the magnificent engineering. By 1935, the line ran from the Swiss frontier along Alsace and Lorraine past the Luxembourg border where the line ended due to the position taken by former Chief of General Staff Marshal Pétain who believed that the forested terrain of the Ardennes was impenetrable, and therefore only needed to be lightly defended based on his experience in the Great War.¹³ Despite the undermining of the plan upon Belgium's declaration of neutrality in 1936, confidence in the Maginot Line did not diminish, as military leaders believed that the strength of the Line would enable a greater number of soldiers to fight on the Belgian border. The loudest skeptic of such a defensive and increasingly outdated security posture was Lieutenant Colonel Charles de Gaulle, who despite convincing Minister of Finance Paul Reynaud about the benefits of modernizing the military as Reynaud did to industry, failed to convince the populace and parliament that the present defensive posture was insufficient.¹⁴

¹³ Ibid., 227-8.

¹⁴ Ibid., 229.

Failure to Adapt to the Progress of War: The Invasion and the fall of France

“In 1916 the Germans attacked Verdun for ten months without taking it; about 162,000 of their troops were killed or reported missing in action. In 1940 the Germans took Verdun in little more than a day; they lost fewer than 200 men. Probably no other detail so graphically conveys the contrast between France’s experience in the First and Second World Wars or so clearly evokes the sudden and profound shock that defeat in 1940 inflicted on her.”¹⁵

Before August 1939, France’s tenuous hope for peace rested on the belief that a Nazi attack on Poland would spark a war between two ideological opponents: Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. However, on 23 August, that hope proved illusory as the Nazi-Soviet pact of non-aggression was made public, despite the perceived incompatibility between the two powers. Similar to France’s Munich Agreement with Nazi Germany a year earlier which permitted the annexation of parts of Czechoslovakia that was populated with mainly German-speaking people (becoming the new territorial claim referred to as Sudetenland), the Russians agreed to such a pact in order to avoid a war, as it allowed them time to prepare defenses, and strengthen their military for offensive operations. Accordingly, the pact was between two aggressors, both of whom had eyes on Poland. Furthermore, beyond the obvious rift in global politics that this created, it split the home front in France even further, as the Communists could no longer defend intervention when a Communist nation was working with the Nazis, and therefore the position taken by the nationalists of the far right seemed justified.¹⁶ Nevertheless, despite the desire to avoid a return to 1914, it was becoming clear that a decision beyond a strict adherence to an isolated defense had to be made, and so, as confirmed by an unnamed French government worker, alliances were made, and “if Poland fights, Britain and France will too.”¹⁷

¹⁵ Ousby, *Occupation: the Ordeal of France 1940-1944*, 21.

¹⁶ Kedward, *La Vie en Bleu: France and the French since 1900*, 232.

¹⁷ Pearson, *The Wolves at the Door: The True Story of America’s Greatest Female Spy*, 30.

Having come to terms with the likelihood of invasion, approximately 4.5 million citizens were drafted into the military, and despite far less enthusiasm than in 1914 there were few cases of refusal. It seemed the patriotism garnered with victory in the Great War was passed down to the new generation that would make up the bulk of France's fighting forces. Along with the new French soldiers, British soldiers as early as September 1939 could be seen marching in columns to their positions in the Nord and Pas-de-Calais areas that were still undergoing reconstruction from the last war. Altogether, despite a decade of reservation, civilian mobilization was in full effect, as air raid drills became common, six hundred thousand copies of civil defense doctrine were passed throughout the country, a volunteer civil corps was established, and sandbags were piled on top of each other around historic monuments in Paris.¹⁸

This unity in the defense of France should not be mistaken for unity in politics however, as partisan rivalry continued to intensify, exemplified by the nationalist Philippe Henriot who said, "Whoever is a follower of Stalin is a follower of Hitler."¹⁹ This sentiment continued to grow in popularity as the invasion of Finland by the Soviets in November 1939 increased in intensity and it became apparent that Germany could not be surrounded as it had been in the Great War, and that if war should come, France's eastern border would be even more concentrated with combat. Therefore, the allies had to find a way to impede the advance of both Germany and the Soviets, and an economic approach was shortly initiated. Upon looking at a map of Scandinavia, it was quickly discovered that the Germans received their iron ore and timber from a route that took them from Sweden, through Norway, and into the North Sea, which was the only route that could be taken since the Baltic route was frozen over in the winter. Premier Daladier was slow to act however, having to contend with decreased morale along his

¹⁸ Kedward, *La Vie en Bleu: France and the French since 1900*, 236.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 236.

own defensive perimeter, but saw the actions in Norway as a way to bolster support.

Notwithstanding, with the Finns and Soviets coming to an armistice agreement on 13 March, Daladier resigned from his position a week later under accusations of underestimating the Finnish War, and was replaced by Paul Reynaud.²⁰

Despite Reynaud's more forceful and nationalist leadership, little changed with regard to France's defensive strategy, and Reynaud proved just as susceptible to partisan politics as his predecessors. Illustrative of the anti-Communist rhetoric that was used towards the mission of defending France, Reynaud promoted a plan to hinder German oil imports by bombing Russian oilfields in the Caucasus, thus alienating the Soviets even further and nearly guaranteeing that two enemies would remain to their east.²¹ However, as spring approached, war production increased with morale in France, until 9 April, when the Germans invaded Norway through coordinated attacks on towns between Oslo and Narvik. Consequently, the Allies lost control of the seas, and an attack by Germany now seemed imminent.²²

On 10 May, 1940, the invasion of France began with the attack of air defense locations and runways in France, Luxembourg, Belgium, and the Netherlands; a far cry from the expected attack along the Maginot Line or along the Belgian border where allied troops were massed in the style of warfare seen twenty four years earlier. At 3:00am, the Nazis swept further south through the Ardennes than the French had anticipated. The Germans did this by announcing their intention to protect Holland, Belgium, and Luxembourg from an invasion by Great Britain and France. In response, Charles de Gaulle led British and French troops at one end of the border, as he believed that the Ardennes Forest and the Meuse River would protect the other end from invasion; therefore, poorly trained and equipped reservists were left to defend this seemingly

²⁰ Ibid., 237.

²¹ Jackson, *France: The Dark Years 1940-1944*, 118.

²² Kedward, *La Vie en Bleu: France and the French since 1900*, 237.

impenetrable area. However, this strategy was already anticipated by Germany, as their army had trained for months to cross the Meuse and push deep into the Ardennes, therefore avoiding the heavily defended Maginot line altogether, and taking the Allies by complete surprise. Ultimately, the French line was breached in a mere three days. By 15 May, Erwin Rommel had advanced so fast that his troops were able to overtake the retreating French, and the next day, the only thing keeping Rommel's troops from Paris was the land that stood between them.²³

This push precipitated the successive failures of all those who opposed the invading Germans, as Belgium's King Leopold III surrendered on May 28, leaving the allies severely outnumbered and forcing the French government to leave Paris for Tours one hundred forty miles southwest of the capital. With the abandonment of Paris came the abandonment of many other towns and cities in such abundance that it became known as the *Exodus*. Flying over the retreat of civilians and soldiers alike, Antoine Saint-Exupéry recalled that it looked "as if some giant had kicked a massive anthill." All told, estimates suggest that six to ten million people fled their homes, as the population of Chartres dropped from 23,000 to 800, and Lille dropped from 200,000 to 20,000. Meanwhile, cities in the south experienced a corresponding population swell of citizen-refugees, as Pau's population increased from 38,000 to 150,000 and Bordeaux's population doubled from its original numbers of 300,000.²⁴

Three days later, Paris was declared an "open city" in which no resistance would be put forth against German invasion. That same day, the French government again moved from Tours to Bordeaux, two hundred miles further south. In dire straits, half of the French Premier's cabinet favored surrender, and rather than make a decision when faced with such a dilemma, Premier Reynaud chose to resign, succeeded by a hero of the Great War, Philippe Pétain, whose

²³ Jackson, *France: The Dark Years 1940-1944*. 118.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 118.

new government was formed on June 19. The route Pétain chose to take was to petition the Nazis for an armistice.²⁵

Philippe Pétain's reputation as an accomplished soldier preceded his appointment as France's oldest head of state, and served as one of the main reasons for his selection. Having become a national hero at the battle of Verdun in 1916, Pétain achieved the title Marshal of France in 1918, a status reserved for military Generals with exceptional achievement.

Highly regarded as a brave and disciplined soldier, Pétain's selection as Premier of France at Bordeaux in June of 1940 was seen as France's last hope for the avoidance of complete destruction. In his new role, Pétain and his Cabinet resolved to make peace with Germany, a goal that was seen by many as naïve after Hitler's disregard for the Munich Agreement.

Another reason for his appointment was that it was believed that he had the credibility to convince the citizens of France that the Germans had grand plans for them that would make the country powerful again, since his prowess in combat convinced some that he was not capitulating in the face of danger but truly had France's best interest in mind. Likewise, his veteran status and his advanced age of eighty-four was seen as a great deterrent for future wars, since it was not uncommon for veterans of the time to look for the most peaceful of solutions after the hell they were put through in years past.

“Although French politics were riddled with defeatism, it is not clear how this could have caused a military defeat. As for morale, censors' reports showed that it had recovered in the spring [of 1940]. This had less to do with Reynaud than with an improvement in the weather. The morale of the French soldiers when fighting began was no worse than in 1914. They were to fight as bravely as those of 1914 when they were properly led and equipped. The failure of 1940 was above all the failure of military planning.”²⁶

²⁵ Pearson, *The Wolves at the Door: The True Story of America's Greatest Female Spy*, 43.

²⁶ J.L. Crémieux-Brilhac, *Le Français de l'an 40*. (1990), 518-48.

The request for an armistice was met with mixed reviews from soldiers and civilians alike, as one soldier voiced what countless others must have thought: “The hundreds of men I’ve watched die—and all for what?”²⁷ On 22 June, Hitler himself was at Compiègne, fifty miles outside of Paris and the precise spot where the Germans had been forced to surrender to the French at the close of the Great War. The Fuehrer had purposely chosen the same location to dictate his harsh terms for this surrender. At 3:30pm of that day, in railway car number 2419D—the same railcar where at 11:00am on 11 November 1918 the French demanded that the Germans appear as supplicants—the supreme commander of the French army, General Charles Huntzinger, signed the armistice.

With the French economy in ruins, hunger and despair were soon rampant throughout France as Paris was taken over by the German military and government buildings became occupied by the Nazis. Refusing to appear broken, the new French government attempted to build a “new democracy” with heavy fascist overtones, replacing the old motto of “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity,” with “Travail, Famille, Patrie”—work, family, fatherland. With this new motto and being forced to meet the onerous conditions of the Armistice, it became clear that the citizens of France now had the same job as citizens in Germany: produce goods and help the war effort for the Reich.²⁸

²⁷ Pearson, *The Wolves at the Door: The True Story of America's Greatest Female Spy*, 43.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 49.

Collaboration and Life Under Occupation

“For a while [the German soldier] observes the Frenchman with a faintly condescending smirk, almost avuncular. Suddenly he whips out his cigarettes and offers him one. The little Frenchman is grasping for a cigarette, you can see it in his eyes; but without batting an eyelid he refuses, simply, clearly and categorically, with an icy ‘non merci.’ He will never know how much pleasure he gave me, that little unknown soldier, defeated and betrayed, but still so proud and dignified.”²⁹

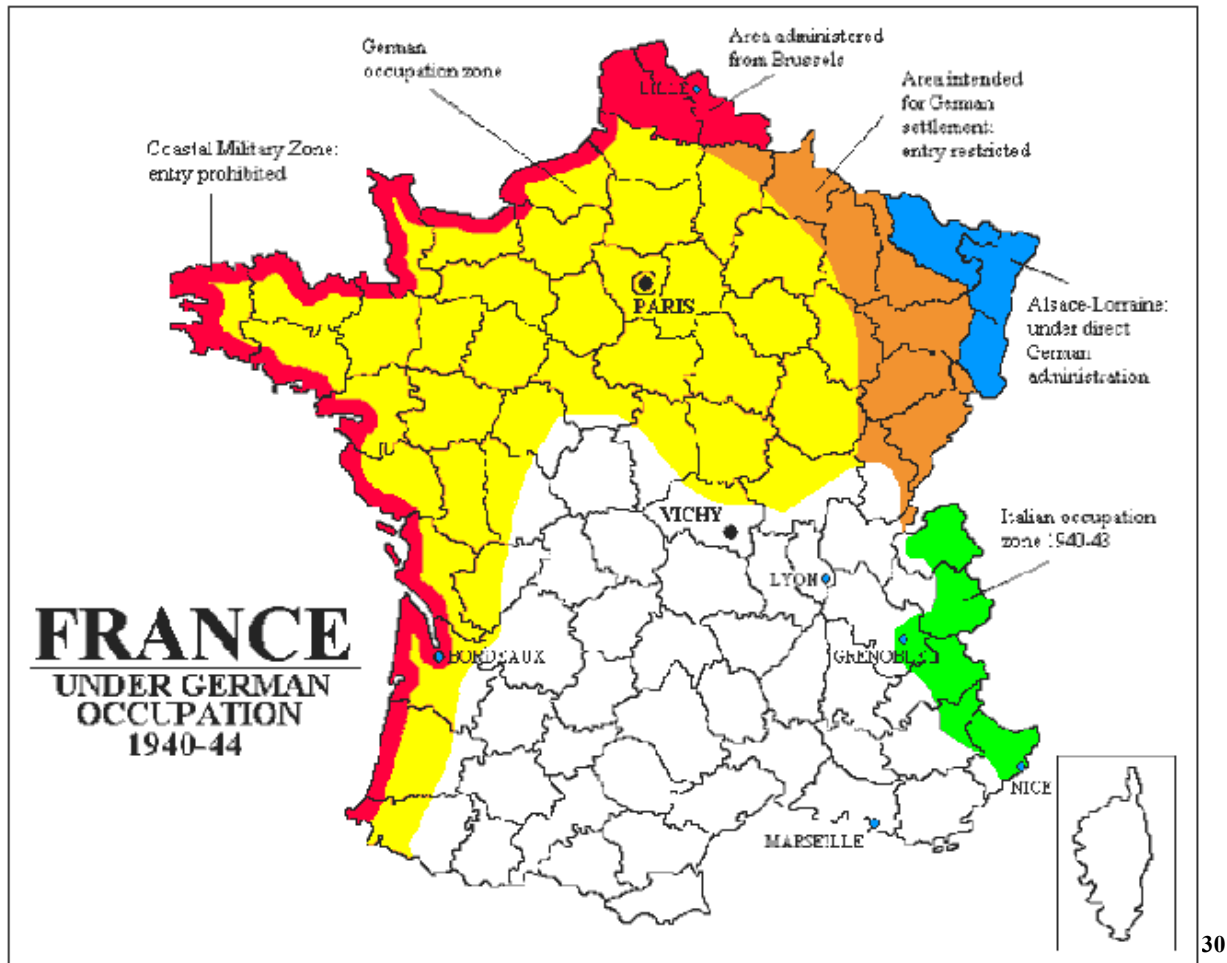


Figure 1

²⁹ Agnes Humbert, *Résistance: Memoirs of Occupied France*, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2009), 13.

³⁰ Map of France under German Occupation between the years 1940-42 [although the title of the map as printed gives the dates 1940-1944, this is not correct: the division between the occupied and non-occupied zones disappeared in Nov. 1942]—provided by the Jewish Virtual Library. [Http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/VichyRegime.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/VichyRegime.html)

Sure of the affection of our admirable army, which fought with traditional heroism against an enemy superior in both numbers and weapons; convinced that it has fulfilled its duties to our Allies by its magnificent resistance; certain of the full support of all the veterans whom I have been privileged to command, and possessing the confidence of all the people, I now dedicate myself personally to the cause of France in order to alleviate her misfortunes...It is with a heavy heart that I now say to you: we must try to put an end to the fighting. Tonight I have contacted the enemy to ask if they are prepared to join us, as honorable soldiers, in seeking...the means whereby hostilities will be terminated.³¹—Philippe Pétain June 1940

On 7 July 1940, a Declaration published by the former Radical Gaston Bergery, who had become disillusioned with parliamentary democracy, called for collaboration with Germany and the installation of a new fascist government in France. Not alone in his shift towards supporting the ideals of fascism, twenty-nine of the ninety-seven deputies who supported the declaration were once Socialists. One such Socialist who made the switch was Marcel Déat, who wrote that “We need, like other peoples who have carried out their revolution, whether Italy, Germany, or Russia, a party, a single party, which establishes and orients the shared aspirations of the people.”³²

Wasting no time with their plans for Vichy France, the renowned organizational skills of the Germans led to the division of France into twelve regions, each with its own prison camps, totaling eighty prisons in all. These prisons were to house the thousands of prisoners returned to France after being hauled to Germany during the brief war. Jews from Alsace were sent to other camps in the Pyrenees, an act that started the mass imprisonment of all Jews in France, which was included in a clause of the armistice that stated that the Vichy government must assist the Nazis in tracking similarly “undesirable” people and deporting them to “more suitable” areas of the country. Pétain obliged this request in hopes that it would result in more autonomy for the new French government, and subsequently established the Laws of Exception and Exclusion,

³¹ Claude Chambard. *The Maquis: A History of the French Resistance Movement* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1976), 1-2.

³² Jackson, *France: The Dark Years 1940-1944*, 143.

which revoked Jewish rights, and on 17 July, a law was enacted that forbade anyone not born of French fathers from becoming a civil servant. With these new laws, Jewish citizens who had lived in France for generations became outcasts, and those who had fled from the Nazis for the security of France found themselves in the same situation they thought they had successfully escaped.

For those looking to thrive in the new government, adjustment to their Nazi superiors brought with it everything from small acts of accommodation in businesses and villages outside of Paris to the adoption of Nazi propaganda and ideals in fascist groups within Paris.³³ Indeed, from the summer of 1940 and beyond, it was apparent that the Vichy government itself was in a race to stay ahead of the Nazis in their repression of minorities, an extension of the policies that started in the 1930s due to economic frustration being blamed on new immigrants. In order to be perceived as trusted associates, the trend in oppression continued as Pétain repealed the Marchandean Law that outlawed racial libel. No free to write their real opinions or just to appease the Nazis and thereby ensure their own security, many journalists proved to be just as anti-Semitic as the nation that invaded them:

Every French citizen should be aware that since the Jews were in such high number in the previous government, and as such were directly responsible for this country's supplies, it is their poor planning that has caused the gross shortages we face today. And can we be completely certain that they, in the greed for which they are so well known, did not stockpile food and clothing for themselves in order to create such an atmosphere of want?³⁴

Despite such anti-Semitic rhetoric and the growing belief in a fascist-party run state, it is still difficult to declare that all members of the Vichy government, at least in its infancy, were true believers in the Nazis' propaganda, and did not just extend such laws simply to secure the right to reenter Paris. Nevertheless, Pétain was not keen on the idea of a multi-party government

³³ Kedward, *La Vie en Bleu: France and the French since 1900*, 246.

³⁴ Pearson, *The Wolves at the Door: The True Story of America's Greatest Female Spy*, 80, 48-49.

that risked limiting his power, and Pierre Laval, Vichy's Minister of State, was suspicious of anything over which he did not have complete control. Therefore, disgusted by the totalitarian route the new government had taken, the more devoted fascists made their way to Paris, which became the home for those with the most fascist and anti-Jewish convictions.³⁵

Meanwhile, while many citizens were fearful of the German influence already taking place in Paris, the trauma of the recent invasion and the prospect of another long and bloody war proved too much for many citizens. Instead of fear or relief, a fog of despair anesthetized most of the population after the desperate exodus from their homes, as the slow drain on resources from their isolation increased their plight.

“Surreal” does not adequately describe the prospect of Nazis marching through Paris. Even before the Germans invaded, rumors of their soldiers ranged from monsters capable of unimaginable atrocities, to stoic, well dressed automatons serving as the epitome of rigid discipline. Indeed, the reality existed somewhere in between, but as Ian Ousby noted, “the Germans—old neighbours, old enemies, already encountered twice before on the battlefield in the memory of some still alive in 1940—remained unfathomably alien.”³⁶ However, as the Germans became unwelcome landlords in France, French citizens became adept at recognizing the difference between a soldier in the Wehrmacht and the SS, and the difference between a policeman and an administrator, just as civilians in close proximity to wars invariably become adept at recognizing common phrases in the enemy's language. Self-preservation was the main goal even in the early days when the French had no idea what to make of their occupiers.³⁷

Despite Pétain's declaration that the French flag “remained unstained,” there was no denying that upon the armistice, France lost its national character, as Swastikas drowned the

³⁵ Jackson, *France: The Dark Years 1940-1944*, 144.

³⁶ Ousby, *Occupation: the Ordeal of France 1940-1944*. 158

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 158-59.

history of France by being displayed on the iconic Champs Elysées and the Eiffel Tower. In his essay “Paris Interdit,” André Labarthe lamented:

The Place de la Concorde. In that spacious square, wide open to the sky—in that vast expanse with the obelisk planted in the middle—the flag is tiny, it hardly exists at all. and yet everything the eye can see, the stones, the monuments, the colonnades, even the trees in the gardens, seem to shrink into the background because of it, as if time had suddenly been halted. The flag is sole master. What we have before us is not a theatrical setting, a view of some foreign capital, or a corner of a dead town—it is something very distressing. It is a place which had been branded. The monuments are reduced to mere outlines.³⁸

Indeed, the Germans looked out of place in such a setting, but they were determined to fix that, as the bright red flag with the swastika affixed at the center displayed throughout the city was merely the first step of their establishment of control over a culture so foreign to them.

For the first few months in Paris, the occupiers were more of a curiosity than the monsters the Parisians had feared, and would soon become. Likewise, they belied the image of the disciplined, stoic automatons imagined by other French citizens, as it was not uncommon to see a Captain wandering about with privates, an image one would never see when observing the French military, which subscribed to a far stricter hierarchy. The disarming demeanor of the Nazi troops was in fact deliberate, as the first troops to enter Paris had been individually selected to impress the local populace in both appearance and bearing. This disarming appearance in the first years of the Occupation was a direct consequence of the atrocities German troops had committed in northern France and Belgium in 1914; in 1940, the Germans sought to demonstrate to France that the Nazis were not the “barbarians” they had been branded as during the First World War, and therefore were ordered to act in such a way that would not allow for any criticism. Such a demeanor earned the Nazis the nickname “Chorus line troops.” Still, Ousby

³⁸ Ibid., 160-61.

notes, “the German...is still very much a spectacle to be observed and deciphered, definitely not someone to be approached, much less someone he has in any meaningful sense come to know.”³⁹

These soldiers behaved as such due to recent events in Poland as well where they had become used to looking upon the enemy as inferior. In France, due to political and ideological considerations, many officers refused to tolerate unauthorized brutalities against the occupied populace. However, in this enforcement of discipline, these same officers began the protocol of executing their own troops in severely high numbers for violating this order, and as such, “the senior officer corps manifested the spirit of ruthlessness and contempt for life that characterized the Third Reich as a whole.”⁴⁰

Despite the issues involving the collaborators in Vichy and the Nazis, life under occupation varied depending on location, “and the particularity of each event and development in what were subsequently called *les années noires* (the dark years) accentuated the relativity of people’s lives and resulted in a complex multitude of different experiences and responses.”⁴¹ However, at the heart of these differences often lay the same goals: to ensure one’s security and live to see another day. For many, it was best to subscribe to the logic expressed by Serge Vaculik about living under occupation: “Better be thought a crook than a patriot here.”⁴² After all, even in the early days of the occupation, resistance was likely to result in a painful death, whereas petty crime was merely a means for survival, and stood a far smaller chance of ending in capital punishment.

As such, the millions trying to cross the Loire (the river that runs nearly across France) into the southern unoccupied zone had to negotiate a litany of rumors concerning where they might find places to hide, how they might secure food, or whether they should engage in

³⁹ Ibid., 164,166.

⁴⁰ Bartov, *Germany’s War and the Holocaust: Disputed Histories*, 17.

⁴¹ Kedward, *La Vie en Bleu: France and the French since 1900*, 245.

⁴² Serge Vaculik, *Air Commando* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1954), 21.

resistance and collaboration. Any one of these locations could be a place as small as a café or as large as an entire village.

While Vichy and Paris were at the heart of collaboration, there were plenty of cities that went the more dangerous route and exemplified the diverse identities assumed under occupation. To the north, there were the Nord and Pas-de-Calais, départements closely tied to the British due to a shared history in the Great War and as such antipathetic to any acts of collaboration. In the northwest, the people of the Breton coast were complicit by feigning indifference to the many small boats that arrived and departed without detection. Perhaps the boldest location in France in the early days of occupation was Le Chambon-sur-Lignon, a town with a strong history of Protestantism having been founded by Huguenots. Led by the family of the strict pacifist Minister André Trocmé and pastor Edouard Theis, the entire town risked complete destruction by both the SS and Gestapo by hiding thousands of Jews in their households over the course of the war and then helping them escape their inevitable fate in the death camps by leading them to a series of escorts to cross the Alps into Switzerland.⁴³

For the first few months, towns and villages south of the demarcation line that separated Occupied France from the Nazis dealt with the desperate influx of refugees, which historian Rod Kedward referred to as “a local achievement, which was offset against the national disaster.”⁴⁴ In such a distressful time, holding onto the little that remained of one’s past had no political affiliation, and to do so meant that for some, collaboration was the means to keep one’s humanity, while for others, the humiliation of subservience to a foreign occupation prepared the foundations for resistance.

⁴³ Philip Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood be Shed: The Story of the Village of Le Chambon and how Goodness Happened There* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1985); Kedward, *La Vie en Bleu: France and the French since 1900*, 246.

⁴⁴ Kedward, *La Vie en Bleu: France and the French since 1900*, 245.

Regardless of the decisions made by individuals either to cooperate or to consider resistance, it would be unfair to say that the majority of citizens did not have the best intentions for France in mind; it was just a matter of what could be more readily exploited for the preservation of both themselves and their family. As such, if collaboration resulted in being connected to a supplier of food, shelter, security, and other daily necessities, then that route was often taken advantage of. On the other hand, even passive resistance such as moving slowly at a factory charged with supplying the German military stood a great chance of removing the little security offered a family trying to make ends meet. Therefore, in the context of the times, the most pressing matters involved too much individual effort, and as such, resistance started as separate sets of goals and actions hidden deep in the bowels of villages and cities around France. However, to some, collaboration was merely prolonging the inevitable crush of Nazi occupation, and there was no way to appease them enough to guarantee total freedom in exchange. A popular saying recalled by Jean Galtier-Boissière embodied this sentiment: “Collaboration means: give me your wristwatch and I will tell you the time.”⁴⁵ As such, this realization began expressing itself in actions as lofty as political opposition as a whole, to as simple as the desire to avoid being transported to work in the German factories, but was a far cry from the coordinated armed conflict it would later evolve into.

Making such an active stance against the occupiers even more difficult was the simple enactment of curfews in order to control local populations, which obliged the populace to form an even greater appreciation of their home. As such, in an effort to control the population, the curfew had the opposite effect and helped instill a greater desire to resist in some citizens, as the abstract sacrifices of war were brought directly to the living rooms of the civilian populace, and

⁴⁵ Ousby, *Occupation: the Ordeal of France 1940-1944*, 20.

it was in the basements and attics of homes and churches where people were forced to remain, that the Resistance truly began.⁴⁶

However, it is important to note that before November of 1942 when the occupied zone expanded to include the entire nation and the grip of the Nazis tightened, resistance was still an abstract concept for people barely able to get by themselves, and any hope of resistance on a large enough scale to be effective would be nothing more than wishful thinking. Despite such difficulties, the first calls for resistance occurred four days before the French had even formally surrendered. From his new location in London, Charles de Gaulle addressed all those who could listen on the BBC in what became known as his *Appeal of 18 June*, representing himself as a counter to Pétain's belief in the inevitability of defeat, and declared that "it was German tanks, planes, and tactics that pushed us back. It was the tanks, planes, and tactics of the Germans that surprised our leaders and brought them to the place that they now find themselves." Indeed, by noting this, he was subtly declaring how right he was in his advice to Reynaud about the need for modernization over the static Maginot Line. His speech concluded with:

I, General de Gaulle, presently in London, call upon French officers and enlisted men who happen to be on British soil or who may come here, with or without weapons; I call upon French engineers and workers skilled in weapons industries who happen to be on British soil or who may come here, to put themselves in contact with me. For no matter what happens, the flame of French resistance must not and will not be extinguished.⁴⁷

De Gaulle's inspirational words notwithstanding, France was neither physically, psychologically, nor materially capable of an effective resistance, especially since approximately 100,000 fighting men were dead, and two million were in prison camps. However, this did not stop daring acts of individual resistance, such as the food salesman Edmond Michelot, who began printing signs in Brive calling for resistance as early as June 1940, or Pierre Kaan, a

⁴⁶ Kedward, *La Vie en Bleu: France and the French since 1900*, 246.

⁴⁷ Chambard, *The Maquis: A History of the French Resistance Movement*, 2-3.

philosophy professor who went around at night hanging posters on the wall calling for the defeat of the Nazis. More than just attempts at organization, acts of sabotage began after the surrender as well, such as the destruction of telephone lines at Rennes and Fougères in July 1940, and the cutting of a German military long-distance cable near Angers.⁴⁸

However, if these individual acts of resistance hoped to create enough momentum to effect change outside of their immediate area, organization was needed, and de Gaulle was one such man prepared to take charge of such an audacious task.

Organization of the Resistance

“As for me, discerning the truth via scraps of news, there was nothing I would not have given to have been wrong...During those difficult hours I could not avoid imagining what the mechanized army of which I had so long dreamed would have been able to do.”⁴⁹

Charles de Gaulle

Historians agree with de Gaulle’s analysis that it was the enemy’s modern equipment and advanced tactics that led to France’s defeat and not sheer numbers as proposed by Pétain. However, while Pétain’s government was clearly collaborating with the Nazis, de Gaulle’s early Free French units were not seen as the devoted patriots that he assumed they would be perceived as. Instead, Pétain represented collaboration as the best way to preserve the nation’s honor, keep France united, and elevate France into the upper tier of the new European order. Historian Rod Kedward noted, “the word ‘collaboration’ had become a strategic concept...it was no longer just a technical word for day-to-day adjustments [by October 1940] to the exigencies of

⁴⁸ Chambard, *The Maquis: A History of the French Resistance Movement*, 3.

⁴⁹ Charles de Gaulle, *The Complete War Memoirs of Charles de Gaulle* (New York: Carroll and Graf Publishers, Inc., 1998), 29, 33.

Occupation.”⁵⁰

With this rift between the two men who held the hearts of France in their hands, de Gaulle quickly served as the international embodiment of resistance, attracting men and women of all parties, albeit more slowly and in fewer numbers than he had originally hoped. Shortly after his *Appeal of 18 June*, de Gaulle continued to condemn the oppressive and unconstitutional nature of laws instituted by the Vichy government, and offered his own Republican values as the backbone of his resistance members. However, this adherence to the Republican ideals of France served in stark contrast to politics in Vichy, and as a result, de Gaulle was sentenced to death in absentia by Pétain’s government in August 1940.

Despite a total of twelve speeches broadcasted directly to France, Winston Churchill’s acknowledgement of de Gaulle as the leader of the Free French on 28 Jun 1940, and the promise of financial and military support from the British government, de Gaulle still attracted only a very small number of French officers of experience and influence. Even still, despite Churchill having declared that, “You are alone, I shall recognize you alone,” the British government officially recognized him as “leader of all the Free French, wherever they are to be found, who rally to him in support of the Allied cause.”⁵¹ Just as disheartening, he attracted no members of the old Republican government, and by the middle of August, found himself in command of a paltry unit of approximately 2,000 men led by 140 officers.⁵² Compounding this lack of enthusiasm for organized resistance was the failed landing of the Free French at Dakar in Senegal on 23 September 1940 despite the support of a large group of the British fleet supplementing the French volunteers. More than just a military defeat, Pétain was able to use the successful repulsion of the Free French by the colonial authorities in Senegal as a way to

⁵⁰ Kedward, *La Vie en Bleu: France and the French since 1900*, 259.

⁵¹ Jackson, *France: The Dark Years 1940-1944*, 390.

⁵² Kedward, *La Vie en Bleu: France and the French since 1900*, 276.

demonstrate that de Gaulle was a traitor who was trying to create a divide between French citizens; by doing so Pétain aimed to show that Vichy was more stable than it really was.⁵³

Furthermore, it was a bold decision for a French citizen to commit to a man who still showed little likelihood of seizing the power that he claimed, and therefore to choose the wrong side would mean that when not being pursued by the Nazis, one also had to be wary of Vichy authorities. When one is a minority with little signs of support and on the run from two different enemies, the likelihood of living through the liberation of France, if it ever came, stood a slim chance of occurring. Likewise, adventurous Americans like those who joined the fight in the Great War and fought with the Lafayette Escadrille had to contend with far more political restraints due to an even stricter devotion to neutrality than in the previous war. When John F. Hasey, an American who would later become a Lieutenant in the Free French Foreign Legion, sought to transfer from the Ambulance Corps to a fighting unit after the Battle of France, he was told by a friend: “You’d better think that over very carefully. It isn’t a decision to be made impulsively and on the spur of the moment. There are complications. The policy of the United States is opposed to American citizens as combatants.” Upon visiting the American Embassy to find out if he could enlist, he discovered that his American citizenship would be lost. Though ultimately deciding to enlist anyway, this barrier, as well as the possibility of choosing the wrong side, proved to stifle recruitment in those early days.⁵⁴

Not to be deterred, and with the public support of Winston Churchill, de Gaulle called upon the support he gained in French Equatorial Africa that gave him the foothold abroad that he desired.⁵⁵ From there, de Gaulle once again addressed France in a speech from the Congo on 27 October declaring that the Vichy regime was merely a subject of the Nazis, an unconstitutional

⁵³ Ibid., 259-60.

⁵⁴ John Hasey and Joseph Dineen, *Yankee Fighter* (Garden City, NY: Garden City Publishing Co., Inc., 1944), 185.

⁵⁵ Jackson, *France: The Dark Years 1940-1944*. 391; Kedward, *La Vie en Bleu: France and the French since 1900*, 290.

government, and that de Gaulle himself would be making the war policy for France from then on. As Rod Kedward put it, “in de Gaulle’s terms the Free French were not to be dismissed as exiles: they were the very embodiment of France;” an audacious claim given his increasing dependence on British support and the fact that Pétain’s government was at its height of influence and power.⁵⁶

Such bold actions and declarations did him no favor in the eyes of many British officials, who thought his influence should be limited to military endeavors, and others because they believed that working with Pétain’s government could help assuage the building tensions. At this crossroad of decisions, it became clear that de Gaulle needed the help of an influential person in France in order to rally greater support of the French, and therefore garner the respect he demanded in England. That person would be Jean Moulin.

Jean Moulin, Charles de Gaulle, and the Unification of the first attempt at a Unified Resistance

Born into a family where Republicanism was almost a religion, Jean Moulin spent a lifetime defending France’s ideals before Germany even crossed the border in 1940. A soldier, a lawyer, an official in the Popular Front, and accused of being a “crypto-communist” by some, historian Julian Jackson notes that Moulin’s resistance to the Germans began on 17 June 1940 “when he tried to cut his throat rather than sign a document dishonouring French colonial troops,” after getting severely beaten for recalcitrance by the German army.⁵⁷ Indeed, as *Chef de Cabinet* of the left-wing Radical Air Minister of the Popular Front, Pierre Cot, Moulin’s experience in secret resistance had begun in the mid-1930s when he was responsible for

⁵⁶ Kedward, *La Vie en Bleu: France and the French since 1900*, 277.

⁵⁷ Jackson, *France: The Dark Years 1940-1944*, 427.

organizing the shipments of arms and materials to the Spanish Republicans.

Wasting no time wallowing after his failed suicide attempt, Moulin began in earnest his to organize resistance after he was dismissed from the Vichy government in November 1940. First, he went to Paris to search for former associates, but discovered instead that Cot had fled to America.⁵⁸ Upon realizing that Paris was hardly a good location to find resisters at that time, Moulin returned to the unoccupied zone to continue the mission that de Gaulle could not do from abroad, which was to make contact in April 1941 with politicians of the deposed Third Republic. Through connections with those who were displeased with the Vichy regime, he was able to make contact with former Prime Minister Paul-Boncour, who had been acting independently to keep in contact with the eighty parliamentarians who had voted against Pétain's empowerment. Elsewhere, he was able to make contact with Henri Frenay, who gave him information on the various Resistance groups, relayed his despair at both a lack of finances and arms, and whose information and contacts provided Moulin the credibility he would need to establish contact with de Gaulle. By May, Moulin found himself living under the alias Joseph Mercier in Marseilles, a city that had embraced its identity as a place of safety for refugees with merchants from China and Czechoslovakia helping refugees with safe passage. Through the relationships formed with these consuls, Moulin was able to meet with their British boss, Hugh Fullerton, and through his tireless effort of secret networking, Moulin was finally able to get a visa for Portugal on 19 August so that he could get to London from there.⁵⁹

Despite charismatic leadership, it is important to remember that these first examples of resistance proved to be like finding a needle in a haystack due to their necessity for secrecy, low number of participants, and poor organization. Making Moulin's search more difficult was that

⁵⁸ Ibid., 427.

⁵⁹ Alan Clinton, *Jean Moulin, 1899-1943: The French Resistance and the Republic* (Gordonsville, VA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 104.

those who formed the foundation of the Resistance came together through previous friendly or professional relationships; avenues that he did not have immediate access too. In the case of Frenay, he was still working in military intelligence at Vichy when he began his recruitment in Marseilles, writing a “Manifesto” for his new organization, *Libération Nationale*. In his manifesto, he advocated bringing together the people of French who had a good will, particularly those in the post-Armistice army, as they not only had the requisite training, but the ability to affect change quickly and on a larger scale.⁶⁰ His friend, Berthe Albrecht, created the pamphlet *Vérités* for the Unoccupied Zone, while a group in the north produced a paper called *Les Petites Ailes*, which hoped to rally the country behind de Gaulle. On 25 November 1940 in Marseilles, François de Menthon was able to assemble enough people to create *Liberté*, stating that they were “at the service of nobody, sacrificing our lives today as yesterday in battle, we merely continue to fight for France.” Initially only resolved to disseminate propaganda against collaboration, they would find themselves joining forces in 1941 with Frenay to form Combat, the largest grouping of resisters in France. By the end of 1940, another group emerged in the Unoccupied Zone with a paper called *Libération*, and was characterized by their leftist politics and animosity towards Vichy and were led by a former naval officer named Emmanuel d’Astier de la Vigerie. As one can see, keeping track of all these groups, let alone uniting them, would prove to be quite the obstacle for Moulin and de Gaulle to overcome.⁶¹

While limited in both scope and effect, this period was not without examples of active resistance. The British Special Operations Executive had begun their “rather nebulous plans” in March 1941 by successfully landing their agents during Operation Savannah, a mission tasked with attacking German pilots. While a tactical failure, it demonstrated their ability to parachute

⁶⁰ Veillon, “France at War: Vichy and the Historians,” *The Resistance and Vichy*, Edited by Sarah Fishman, Laura Downs, Ioannis Sinanoglou, Leonard Smith, and Robert Zaretsky, (New York: Berg, 2000), 167.

⁶¹ Clinton, *Jean Moulin, 1899-1943: The French Resistance and the Republic*, 102-3.

agents into France and the benefit of having an organized group of resisters in France in order both to aid the agents in hiding, and to increase the likelihood of success. Furthermore, the 22 June 1941 German invasion of the Soviet Union brought the Communists out of hiding and into direct conflict with the Nazis, erupting in the targeting of German officers on 21 August, which resulted in brutal reprisals against entire French villages such as the execution of 98 hostages at Châteaubriant on 23 October, and breaking down the façade of the *chorus line troops* portrayed by the Nazi occupation after the fall of France in Paris.⁶²

Departing from France on 9 September 1941, Moulin intentionally said nothing in his letter to Cot about the possibility of meeting de Gaulle; Cot despised de Gaulle and saw him as a fascist, and Moulin's connection to the Socialist Cot would also not win him any favors in England had it become known. The reason for this speaks to the tenuous relationships within the Resistance in coming years, as political ideology held just as much import as clandestine proficiency since the group that had the most influence stood the greatest chance of influencing the new government if the Nazis were ever removed. Therefore, despite the French Communist Party (PCF) being the largest contingent of the future Resistance with more than ten thousand people, they would remain in the background of leadership due to their politicized agenda for the duration of the war.⁶³

While awaiting transportation from Portugal to London, Moulin met British representatives who were not consuls as he assumed, but members of the Special Operations Executive (SOE), a group of clandestine operatives trained in reconnaissance, intelligence, subversion, and espionage. As reported by Major L.H. Mortimore, Moulin "created an excellent impression," and "his shining patriotism and personality commanded attention." Unaware that

⁶² Ibid., 105-6.

⁶³ Jackson, *France: The Dark Years 1940-1944*, 427; Patrick Marnham, *Resistance and Betrayal: The Death and Life of the Greatest Hero of the French Resistance* (New York: Random House, 2000.)

Moulin already had every intention of joining the Free French, Mortimore contacted London to set up contacts for his recruitment, because the SOE's RF Section, which fell under the ultimate command of de Gaulle himself, was to consist of strictly native-French speakers, and was desperate to add to their ranks and thus their prestige within the British clandestine service with the help of Moulin's connections. This separate unit would serve as a point of contention between de Gaulle and the SOE, who had their own section (designated F Section) that consisted of agents involved with the same missions but utilized non-native French speakers.

Finally, on 25 October 1941, Moulin was able to meet de Gaulle, and for all of de Gaulle's bold rhetoric in the months prior, Moulin's approach to the meeting was just as brazen, as he declared he had met all the leaders of the Resistance in the south, including the groups Liberté, Frenay's Libération national movement, and Libération, without realizing that he had not even heard of Franc-Tireur. In fact, there were two groups known as Franc-Tireur: one founded in Lyon, and one founded as the military arm of the Communist PCF in 1941 after the German invasion of the Soviet Union. The one established as the military arm of the PCF remained even more secretive than others due to their leftist political orientation, creating a paper called *La Dernière Colonne* (The Last Column), and fell under the leadership Jean-Pierre Levy.⁶⁴

Along with the information he provided, Moulin contributed valuable advice on how to make the most of it through offensive operations. Historian Julian Jackson elaborated on this notion by stating "its forces could assist the allies at the liberation, and maintain order in the transition from the Vichy regime to its successor." Furthermore, it was necessary for the Free French to adopt the Resistance in order to prevent the Communists from grabbing too much power and influence, revealing once again the precarious politics that beset the Resistance, even

⁶⁴ Jackson, *France: The Dark Years 1940-1944*, 429; Clinton, *Jean Moulin, 1899-1943: The French Resistance and the Republic*. 103.

when dealing with issues of liberation.⁶⁵ So impressed was de Gaulle by Moulin's passion with which he spoke, he asked that Moulin return to France as the official "Delegate of the French National Committee to the Unoccupied Zone." In this capacity, Moulin was charged with the responsibility of convincing the resistance groups in the south to recognize de Gaulle's position of authority and unify their efforts in order to mitigate their limited manpower, funding, and equipment.⁶⁶

On 1 January 1942, Moulin parachuted back into France with money and training material for the three largest and most influential movements in the south, Combat, Libération (Sud), and Franc-Tireur. Meanwhile, Christian Pineau, a Socialist, arrived at de Gaulle's office in London with information on Libération-Nord, and informed de Gaulle of the first open acceptance of de Gaulle's aims for the resistance. Despite the heavy concentration on the military aspect of the Resistance, the final draft of the declaration was a testament to de Gaulle's dedication to restoring internal freedoms in France as he promised the election of a National Assembly by all citizens regardless of gender and the creation of social security. The declaration was published in a clandestine newsletter in June 1942 and contained the statement: "Even as the French people are uniting for victory they are gathering together for a revolution."⁶⁷

The left-wing term "revolution" was used deliberately in order to refute the unsubstantiated claim that de Gaulle was looking for dictatorial power of his own, a reminder of the tenuous political atmosphere still apparent even in such desperate times. The internal political rivalries evident within the Resistance during the Occupation also influenced the amount of allied support given to the different groups within the Resistance. Nevertheless, the majority of Resistance groups believed that de Gaulle was speaking for all of France at that time,

⁶⁵ Jackson, *France: The Dark Years 1940-1944*, 429.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 429.

⁶⁷ Kedward, *La Vie en Bleu: France and the French since 1900*, 290-91.

and the declaration was extremely beneficial to Moulin's mission of uniting the three movements in the south. This, combined with his charisma and the money and materials he carried, allowed him to partially unite the three movements in January 1943 under the name Mouvements Unis de la Résistance (MUR). In this capacity, they became the first group to recognize de Gaulle as their leader, and began work to train the groups increasingly known as Gaullists and "turn the loose groupings of its Armée Secrète (referred to as AS; the combat-arms unit within the Free French) into an effective shadow army."⁶⁸

However, if the French had any hopes of causing real damage to their occupiers, they not only needed to be better organized, but better trained and equipped. Conveniently, across the English Channel, Winston Churchill had long since recognized the impending threat of the Nazis at his front door and had authorized the creation of an organization dedicated to fighting the war before it came to British soil. On 16 July 1940, to the benefit of both France and Britain alike, the Special Operations Executive was founded from Section D, a unit that specialized in gathering intelligence, and training, equipping, and funding guerrillas for the exact type of warfare that the French Resistance would soon find itself increasingly active in.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Ibid., 291.

⁶⁹ Pearson, *The Wolves at the Door: The True Story of America's Greatest Female Spy*, 62-3.

Chapter 2: **The Search for the “Ivy League PhD who could Win a Bar Fight”⁷⁰**

“We were not afraid to make mistakes because we were not afraid to try things that had not been tried before... You can’t succeed without taking chances.”

– Maj. Gen. William J. Donovan, OSS founder⁷¹

Formation of the British SOE

In order to “investigate every possibility of attacking potential enemies by means other than the operations of military forces,” the British Government began in 1938 to consider clandestine operations through the establishment of Section D (“D” allegedly stood for destruction⁷²) under the authority of the Foreign Office.⁷³ In this capacity, Section D was to consider potential targets to sabotage within Germany and was to look into employing individuals (such as disenfranchised Jews and Communist citizens) who could be convinced to undertake these actions of subversion. Following the outbreak of war in September 1939 and despite the French government’s refusal to consider the possibility of their own demise, Section D had the forethought to leave ten small caches of equipment and supplies in Northern France, each with two Frenchmen in charge of their security. By early June of 1940, with the fall of France all but inevitable in the judgment of the British government and with word of the ruthless Nazi actions available to the public, Winston Churchill voiced his enthusiasm for the creation of an organization that specialized in irregular warfare. It was only then that Winston Churchill, despite being a member of the War Cabinet since 3 September 1939 and having just been

⁷⁰ Samuel Southworth, *U.S. Special Warfare: The Elite Combat Skills of America's Armed Forces* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2004) Major General Donovan used this description as his ideal candidate for service with the OSS implying that he desired an independent, cunning, and crafty individual who could think outside of the box, while being able to use force with discretion if forced to do so.

⁷¹ Susan Kerr and John Gresham, "The OSS Society: Keepers Of Gen. Donovan's Flame," *Year in Special Operations*, 2010, 88.

⁷² David Stafford, *Secret Agent: The True Story of the Covert War against Hitler* (Woodstock, NY: The Overlook Press, 2000), 13.

⁷³ Pearson, *The Wolves at the Door: The True Story of America's Greatest Female Spy*, 62.

appointed Prime Minister, was made aware of the existence of Section D. Under the command of Hugh Dalton, also the Minister of Economic Warfare, the proposed guerrilla operations began in earnest on 16 July 1940, and the Special Operations Executive (SOE) was born.⁷⁴

Dalton, nicknamed Dr. Dynamo, had, like Churchill, been an ardent opponent of appeasement during the 1930s and he believed that “ungentlemanly warfare” was the best way to ensure British security without committing to a conventional fight against the Nazis. However, his vision expanded well beyond merely defending against Nazi aggression as he argued that the British should organize movements in every occupied territory, similar to Sinn Fein in Ireland, and the guerrillas in China fighting the Japanese. His goal was ultimately to “use many different methods, including industrial and military sabotage, labour agitations and strikes, continuous propaganda, terrorist acts against traitors and German leaders, boycotts and riots.”⁷⁵

Plainly put in its founding charter, the mission of the SOE was “to co-ordinate all action, by way of subversion and sabotage, against the enemy overseas.”⁷⁶ After all, Hitler had introduced to the world a type of warfare marked by speed and violence of action that had never been seen before; such an unorthodox enemy required an unorthodox response if the allies hoped to slow down the Nazi advance. Upon the official creation of the SOE, Churchill gave Dalton one simple directive: “Now set Europe ablaze.”⁷⁷

Though the existence of the SOE was secret, a team of administrators had to be formed in order to recruit, screen, assess, and select potential candidates for entry into the new organization. Due to the necessity of secrecy, the nucleus of the organization was made up of those from the old Section D, consisting of bankers, businessmen, or lawyers with far reaching

⁷⁴ Ibid., 62-3.

⁷⁵ Stafford, *Secret Agent: The True Story of the Covert War against Hitler*, 12.

⁷⁶ Pearson, *The Wolves at the Door: The True Story of America's Greatest Female Spy*, 63.

⁷⁷ Stafford, *Secret Agent: The True Story of the Covert War against Hitler*, 12.

connections; people who “knew how to move money and fix deals.”⁷⁸ What made the selection of these people a difficult task was that there was no standard by which potential agents were to be assessed, and therefore no one was quite sure what the requirements should be for selecting those who would recruit those potential agents. As a result, recruiters were selected for their unique vision of a potential candidate. Aware that this could bring in a variety of people with entirely different and unique skills, the SOE was set up in such a way that it was compartmentalized in order to avoid any one-person gaining access to the complete process of recruitment, assessment, and selection. Making such a task even more difficult was that the recruiter could not merely place want ads into the public press. Therefore, recruiters were selected for their connections as much as their vision, as candidates had to be sought without the candidate having any knowledge of what they are being recruited to do. As one recruiter later recalled, “Examining such an enormous task, one felt as if one had been told to move the Pyramids with a pin.”⁷⁹

As one would imagine upon seeing the broad recruitment policies of candidates, SOE personnel came from many parts of society and every profession. Working around the clock at 64 Baker Street under the cover name of Inter-Services Research Bureau and facetiously known in the SOE as the Baker Street Irregulars (an ode to Sherlock Holmes), recruiters never brought potential or new recruits to Baker Street. The wide spectrum of people being recruited and the very nature of the tasks they were being recruited to fill required that every recruit be thoroughly vetted through background checks to ensure they were trustworthy.⁸⁰

After the first recruits were properly screened, the ranks grew steadily due to the suggestions of their friends and associates. One such agent was Francis Cammeaerts who would

⁷⁸ Ibid., 13.

⁷⁹ Pearson, *The Wolves at the Door: The True Story of America's Greatest Female Spy*, 63.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 65.

go on to be one of the most distinguished agents in France; he was enlisted through this process, despite originally being a conscientious objector until his brother was killed with the Royal Air Force.

For a number of reasons I decided I had to join in the combat with fascism which the whole of the nation was involved in. I tried to find some kind of activity in which such talents as I had might be used, of which knowledge of French was a clear one, and it was in that way that I consulted Harry Ree [a friend] who was in the intelligence services at the time and he said yes, I can get you an interview. I was told to go to a room...in which I saw an officer. We spoke French the whole time...⁸¹

Just as the SOE's administration was cleverly compartmentalized, the operational side of the Executive was similarly organized to handle different areas of work within different regional focuses. With France being the closest country to Nazi territory, F Section was formed with the impending threat in mind and led by Leslie Humphreys while the French were still defending their homeland from Nazi invasion. In July of 1941, Maurice Buckmaster took control of F Section, and he retained control of it until the end of the war. In this capacity, Buckmaster began the ardent recruitment of French-speaking individuals with the purpose of having them infiltrate the country, either by air, across the English Channel, or through Spain via the Pyrenees.⁸²

However, F Section was strictly prohibited from recruiting any of the native French who were living in Great Britain. That responsibility fell to another section within the SOE, the RF Section. At the insistence of Charles de Gaulle, who by this time was acting in absentia as the leader of the Free French, this section, formed in the spring of 1941, was to consist of only native French citizens, and would answer only to de Gaulle.⁸³ The fact that the British had a section dedicated to operations in France that were not directly under de Gaulle's control would prove to be a source of friction between the British and de Gaulle through the end of the war.

⁸¹Stafford, *Secret Agent: The True Story of the Covert War against Hitler*. 18.

⁸²Pearson, *The Wolves at the Door: The True Story of America's Greatest Female Spy*, 63-4.

⁸³*Ibid.*, 64.

Further demonstrating the unique specializations of the SOE, DF Section was tasked with handling those who escaped from France, primarily through Spain, and the EU/P Section was tasked with acting as a liaison between the Polish government in exile in London and the SOE. EU/P Section also dealt with a large number of Poles elsewhere, and since a half million lived in Central France alone, the infiltration of occupied France proved even more necessary.

Finally, revealing just how thorough the SOE was at recognizing possible threats and to exploit the potential benefits of establishing relationships throughout the world, the AMF Section was based in Algiers and worked in southern areas of France, and there were still more sections in the Middle East, the Balkans, and Scandinavia.

The abundance of sections and the lack of coordination inherent with a new command structure resulted in occasional confusion, which grew more frequent as the number of resistance organizations in France increased. One example of this poor synchronization was when F Section agents arrived at a parachute drop location in France only to find RF Agents already grabbing the supplies sent from London.⁸⁴ On another occasion, a group was sent to the Bordeaux docks to reconnoiter a possible German shipping target; while there, they watched the ship explode due to explosives planted by Royal Marine canoeists supplied to them by none other than the SOE.⁸⁵

With these situations came the recognition of the importance of accounting for all variables in training and coordination, because when an agent found him or herself alone in France the smallest detail or slightest misstep could prove disastrous. One such example recalled by John Debenham-Taylor was an anecdote in which shortly after an agent had arrived in France, he had decided to enter a café in order to start gathering atmospherics of the town to be reported back to

⁸⁴ Ibid., 64.

⁸⁵ Paddy Ashdown, *A Brilliant Little Operation: The Cockleshell Heroes and the Most Courageous Raid of World War 2* (London: Aurum Press Ltd, 2012).

London later in the week. In order to remain unsuspecting, he ordered a black coffee, only to immediately arouse the attention of the waitress and customers around him because “there wasn’t any other kind of coffee you could have in France in those days.” He was not told what had happened to the agent, but even the possibility of compromise, torture, and an anonymous death was enough for the recruits to heed the importance of an attention to detail.⁸⁶

Aside from providing the training for the potential agents, the SOE had to ensure that weapons, tools, and equipment were needed that could be produced in high numbers, would be easy to use, and would be durable enough to be dropped by parachute, deployed underwater, or used in the foulest of weather conditions. The Sten Gun, the weapon that was ubiquitous in resistance forces throughout Europe, and the Fairbairn and Sykes knife, the preferred weapon for close combat and stealth that became the symbol of elite forces in both the U.S. and the U.K., epitomized the importance of practicality in the missions that were to come. To meet these unusual requirements, a research and development team was charged with designing devices such as booby traps, miniature motorbikes, and tiny submarines.⁸⁷

As for the development of radios, cryptologists created codes and experts in communications created a staff whose job was to keep in continuous contact through messages with agents abroad. Eventually, even forgers were hired to begin work on counterfeit French francs that could be taken back into France to purchase whatever was necessary during missions. Moreover, counterintelligence was required to supplement intelligence analysts, as the support network continued to swell in order to meet the demands for such integral work behind the scenes of the war effort.⁸⁸

Though they were not immune to the problems that one would expect of a unique

⁸⁶Stafford, *Secret Agent: The True Story of the Covert War against Hitler*, 41.

⁸⁷Ibid., 29.

⁸⁸Ibid., 29-30.

organization with such an ambitious mission, by the end of the war, the survival rate of SOE agents deployed throughout Europe was between sixty and seventy percent, which was ten percent higher than Baker Street's initial estimates. Despite the usually glamorous connotation of spy work and the life of an agent, Noreen Riols assured that such success was a testament to the training and lessons endured before deployment to Europe: "I don't think there's anything romantic in the world of spying except in books...It wasn't cocktail parties and slinky spies with long cigarette holders seducing people. It was everyday living, and rough living, very often."⁸⁹

All the while, the search for exceptionally qualified candidates with a wide variety of skills, a desire to contribute directly to the war effort, and the realization that this adventurous, and dangerous work would go unrecognized in the public eye continued with vigor.⁹⁰

Virginia Hall: An American sent to France by London

Despite the diversity of agents within the SOE, Virginia Hall stands out even in the midst of one of the most unique, educated, and experienced organizations of the war. Born into an affluent American family in Baltimore, Maryland, Hall studied French, Italian, and German at Radcliffe and Barnard Colleges and acquired first hand experience with these languages and cultures abroad while traveling and living in France, Germany, and Austria. Determined to gain a position within the State Department, she built her resume by serving as a clerk at the American Embassy in Poland in 1931. However, that dream disappeared following a hunting accident in Turkey when she shot herself in the leg, which required amputation below the knee.

Refusing to let her disability hold her back, she attended graduate school at American University in Washington, DC until the call of her beloved France, anxious with the threat of

⁸⁹ Ibid., 45.

⁹⁰ Pearson, *The Wolves at the Door: The True Story of America's Greatest Female Spy*, 64.

war, grew too loud to resist. Joining an ambulance unit similar to the Red Cross right before the Germans invaded France, she saw the worst of what war had to offer as Germany crossed the border through Belgium and crushed the French military. Ignoring the pain in her leg from the constant chaffing of the protective sock over her stump, Hall continued to work, with ever-greater intensity, all the way up to the French surrender in June 1940. Incredulous upon hearing of the French surrender, Hall lamented, “What had happened to liberté, égalité, fraternité? How could feisty France, the first nation to extend aid to the American Revolution and the nation who had been victorious over the Germans in the war a little over two decades ago be willing to send up a white flag?”⁹¹

Upon her escape from France to London, word quickly spread of her return, as she became a small celebrity around the American Embassy as well as certain British agencies. Without time even to gather her own thoughts, she was promptly brought into a conference room and asked about the situation in France; when asked to assess the French reaction towards the occupiers, she responded that the Germans were attempting to ingratiate themselves with French society, especially in Paris, and thus far their attempts have met only marginal success. Also asked was whether there was evidence of any resistance efforts, offensive enemy activity, and any specific economic and social issues.⁹²

With regards to the economy, Hall reported the dire situation she had just escaped from: massive food shortages prevailed everywhere, regardless of whether the city was occupied by Nazis, or unoccupied like much of the southern France, because the majority of food was diverted to the Nazi Army. In fact, the shortage in food was worse in the unoccupied regions, and catastrophic in eastern regions like Alsace due to their relative isolation. In Paris, a strict

⁹¹ Ibid., 43.

⁹² Ibid., 43.

curfew was enforced, and anyone found on the streets after 7:00pm was arrested. In these desperate times, only one industry prospered: prostitution, as they had an all-new clientele in the Germans. When asked how the French felt about the addition of their new German national identity, she stated frankly (but overly optimistically) that many of the French were ready to revolt⁹³, particularly those in the “nono,” or unoccupied area.⁹⁴

At the end of the hour-long debriefing, Virginia accepted a position in the office of the embassy’s military attaché. While not the ideal position for a woman with such initiative, she embraced this posting as a means to remain close to government affairs, which would give her the best chance at finding a way to return to her beloved France in the mission she desired: direct participation in the action against the Nazis.⁹⁵ Before arriving in England, a Briton by the name of George Bellows gave Hall his list of contacts in London, and just as recruiters for the SOE were selected for their connections and creativity, those who desired such unique work as Virginia required connections of their own. These connections took her into circles that would eventually lead to her attendance at a cocktail party hosted by Vera Atkins, the legendary recruiter for the SOE in charge of one of their most sensitive missions: recruiting, training, and deploying female agents.⁹⁶

As was the protocol for recruiting all prospective agents, Atkins went through a series of meetings with Hall at various locations without Hall realizing that they were actually interviews. She discovered that Virginia was “self-confident, had said she spoke French fluently, and knew the country.” Better yet, she looked strong and healthy, and the disability that disqualified her from so many opportunities before, proved to be a great asset: “No one... would ever guess

⁹³ In reality, this sentiment was not very accurate for reasons elaborated upon in Chapter 3. For one, many people in France were too concerned with barely providing enough food and money for their family to survive, so active resistance required time and resources they simply did not have. Another reason is that resistance brought with it danger to not only the participant, but also one’s entire family and town.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 52-3.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 53.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 61.

Virginia was missing a leg,” and better still, if it was discovered, no one would suspect her real identity due to such an obvious disability.⁹⁷ True to form, Atkins had gotten everything she wanted out of these casual meetings between friends, and Hall was none the wiser until she was officially a recruit.

Upon unhesitatingly accepting Atkin’s vague offer to try out for what was to come, Hall found herself in a training regimen with a high attrition rate. The SOE was very selective and many recruits did not meet their standard for various reasons, whether it was the rigorous physical training, a lack of ability to guard a secret, or having a personality that was ill-suited for a career that required independence, carried with it high amounts of stress, and provided almost no specific instructions. Those who failed were kept in a manor in Scotland for several weeks until the training they had completed was deemed irrelevant, thus protecting the SOE’s training standards. Upon passing the training in first aid, espionage, communications, weaponry, and a host of other skill sets such as enduring interrogation, Virginia was deemed qualified in resourcefulness, independence, leadership, and the ability to work well as a member of a team. Throughout the training, recruits were repeatedly told that they, “will be a cog in a very large machine, and its smooth functioning depends on each separate cog carrying out its part efficiently. It’s the object of this course to clarify the part [they] will play.”⁹⁸

Furthermore, recruits were under no illusion that their jobs would not lead to deadly encounters, whether deliberate, or in self-defense. Accordingly, extensive weapon training was of dire necessity, especially gaining proficiency in close combat. The tool of choice in such a grisly task was the Fairbairn Sykes knife, “a double-edged knife, an eight-inch blade with a cross piece,” and a “ribbed centre [on] both sides.” Developed from bayonets used in the Boer War

⁹⁷ Ibid., 61.

⁹⁸ Stafford, *Secret Agent: The True Story of the Covert War against Hitler*, 27.

four decades prior, the knife was considered to be too dangerous for students to practice with; instead, a short, thick piece of rope was used until the recruits were deemed fit to practice with the real knife.⁹⁹

An intimate knowledge of the enemy was arguably more important than the ability to dispose of them, as a dead German was likely to raise suspicion in an otherwise placid village. Therefore, students received lectures about the politics and ideology of the Nazi Party, the army, and the Gestapo, and learned first hand from agents returning from France on how to deal with police questioning and interrogations. However, John Debenham-Taylor recalled not going into interrogation techniques with much intensity:

I think everybody who was going into occupied Europe knew perfectly well what might happen to them if they were caught; namely, torture and beatings. There was no point in trying to spell that out in great detail. The main thing we would concentrate on was in trying to impress upon them the need to stay quiet for as long as they could without giving anything away, for at least forty-eight hours, which gave their colleagues time to learn that they had been arrested and to make themselves scarce.¹⁰⁰

Undeterred by the risks that such work brought with it, Hall waited restlessly for months to start contributing to the war effort, and she finally got her chance in early August of 1941. After being briefed on her cover story by Jacques de Guéllis, who had already gone to France to set up her contacts, she was ready to enter occupied France.¹⁰¹ For the next fifteen months, Hall planned and led countless operations of reconnaissance, intelligence gathering, sabotage, and subversion in both Vichy France and “nono.” Her cover story was that “she was a French-speaking American newspaper reporter,” named Brigitte LeContre, and she was “sent to write articles to keep the Americans apprised of the situation in Vichy France.” Calling on an old family friend back in the United States, she was able to land a real job with the editorial

⁹⁹ Ibid., 29.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 35.

¹⁰¹ Pearson, *The Wolves at the Door: The True Story of America's Greatest Female Spy*, 75.

department at the *New York Post*. Ensuring she could substantiate her occupation as a reporter, Hall's articles were seen regularly in America where she commented on the dire food shortages and ever-increasing anti-Semitic rhetoric and practices of the Nazi and Vichy leadership.

Along with the active (sabotage) and passive (intelligence gathering) nature of her mission in Lyon, she was also tasked with the dangerous job of rescuing downed allied pilots, keeping them in safe houses, and then coordinating their escape over the Pyrenees and then to England, a task that was made more difficult by an increasing Nazi presence both in Lyon and in the Atlantic.

Of course, the majority of SOE missions entailed locating, organizing, leading, and participating in the resistance effort, and Hall's mission was no different. As she soon discovered, "the seeds of resistance were alive in some French people from the very moment Pétain's government capitulated. They preferred death to accepting German domination," but these French citizens were rare, disorganized, and still hesitant to act out on their desire for resistance.¹⁰² According to statistics gathered from the reports of multiple agents, "only one French citizen in one hundred was ready to resist in 1940," and it would take the supplies, leadership, and confidence of the SOE to make the most of these determined people.¹⁰³ These acts of resistance, while not as dramatic at first, were still an effective way to build confidence within their movement without risking their destruction before they could truly get started. With the help of supplies from the SOE, and the training and leadership of the agents, posters were placed calling for active resistance, and slowly a network was created first in neighborhoods, and later entire cities. Such acts ranged from the bold, such as the redirection of freight cars loaded

¹⁰² Ibid., 93.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 93.

with German supplies and sabotage of German equipment, to the passive, such as moving as slowly as possible in the German factories so as to limit production for the enemy's war effort.

By November of 1941, sensing that the Gestapo were closing in on her location since the Germans had already been made aware of the "the Limping Lady," Hall broke with her routine of reporting on the dire, but not controversial economic situation, by writing about the increasing restriction on Jewish citizens, noting that "Jews are not permitted to be bankers, stockbrokers, publicity agents...nor are they allowed to earn a living by working in the theatre, movies or the press," as well as "Aryans" being appointed over formerly Jewish-owned businesses until sale or liquidation.¹⁰⁴ Just as she had suspected, the Germans pushed into the formerly unoccupied areas less than a year later, thus restricting the Vichy government, who in turn, also increased their already heavy-handed governing methods so as to maintain some semblance of power.

With the increase in German presence, an unfortunate act of betrayal in her ranks of resisters finally caught up to her when Robert Alesh, who went by the name Abbé Ackuin, reported her entire circuit of resistance in Lyon, code-named Heckler. As it turned out, in August 1942, Klaus Barbie, an SS leader famous for his brutal tactics in an organization already infamous for its savagery, had heard about a "Canadian" woman "usually in the company of one or two men, rarely the same ones." The concurrent German push into the unoccupied areas and further intelligence led their drive towards Lyon, and the more he thought about the chance for promotion and prestige that would come with her capture, the more resolute Barbie became in playing a part in her capture. As this pressure mounted, Heckler's ability to operate undetected became compromised and Hall escaped through Spain, unaware that she had become one of the Gestapo's most wanted persons.¹⁰⁵ Later that year, while back in London, she received

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 91.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 138.

confirmation that Heckler had been rounded up by the Gestapo, a likely death sentence for acts of resistance in France.¹⁰⁶

Still in Spain after four months and desperate to return to France in a similar capacity as before, Hall requested such a job in a letter to Buckmaster, but was met with a response that she did not want to hear. In the response, Buckmaster notified her of a position in London as a briefing officer in order to stay in touch with the actions of F Section, as well as serve in a position to deploy back into the field “around about D-day.” However, this did not suffice for Hall, because to her, “the really important work needed to be done before D-Day, and who knew when it would even occur anyway. She did not want to be sitting in some silly office in London...when she knew her talents could make a difference in the field.” Reluctantly, she still accepted the position because in order to go back to France, she needed to get back to London first in order to change her false identity and start looking for a new mission. She got her wish shortly thereafter when she heard whispers of a new American organization modeled after the SOE being formed by a decorated soldier from World War I, William Donovan.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 169.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 169-70.



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Figure 2

The Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, created by King George V in 1917 to honor the thousands of men and women who served in noncombatant roles during the Great War, was presented to Virginia Hall in November of 1943 “for service in the field, or before the enemy, or for the services to the Empire.” She declined the traditional audience with the King so that she could maintain anonymity, which ensured she was not prevented from partaking in future clandestine missions.

¹⁰⁸ Cate Lineberry, "Wanted: The Limping Lady." Smithsonian. <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history-archaeology/hall.html?c=y&page=1>

Formation of the OSS

Upon the surrender of France to Germany in June of 1940, Franklin Roosevelt's unlikely friendship with his gubernatorial opponent in the election of 1932 in New York, William Donovan, resulted in Donovan being promptly sent to London to assess the British plans to repel almost certain invasion by the Nazis. While there Donovan was struck by the competency of the British defenses, as well as the proficiency of the British Secret Intelligence Service, known as MI-6. Consequently, he "strongly suggested that America develop an organization to control foreign intelligence and covert operations."¹⁰⁹ Respectful of his old friend's recommendation, Roosevelt appointed Donovan as the Coordinator of Information (COI) on the eleventh of July 1941. As stated by the President himself:

In his capacity as Coordinator, Mr. Donovan will collect and assemble information and data bearing on national security from the various departments and agencies of the Government and will analyze and collate such materials for the use of the President and such other officials as the President may designate.

Mr. Donovan's task will be to coordinate and correlate defense information, but his work is not intended to supersede or to duplicate, or to involve any direction of or interference with, the activities of the General Staff, the regular intelligence services, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, or of other existing departments and agencies.¹¹⁰

Of course, this new organization was not without its skeptics; the isolationist Charles Lindbergh belittled it as nothing more than "Full of politics, ballyhoo, and controversy," and the generals at the War Department derided it as a "fly-by-night civilian outfit headed up by a wild man who was trying to horn in on the war."¹¹¹ Indeed, Donovan had a bureaucratic and ethical battle ahead of him, as the U.S. had a strong aversion to spying in the early twentieth century; Henry Stimson, the Secretary of State for Herbert Hoover, once exclaimed, "Gentlemen don't

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 170.

¹¹⁰ Franklin D. Roosevelt: "Statement on the Appointment of William J. Donovan as Coordinator of Information," July 11, 1941. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*.

¹¹¹ Richard Smith, *OSS: The Secret History of America's First Central Intelligence Agency* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 1.

read each other's mail!" upon finding out about a code breaking organization existing after the conclusion of World War I.¹¹² However, Bill Donovan was never one to be deterred by either the unimaginative or those who stood in his way, and he was hardly the unqualified millionaire Wall Street Lawyer he was depicted as by his opponents. On the contrary, he was also a legend from World War I who held the three highest military decorations, the Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross, and Silver Star, which also provided a further source of friction due to the jealousy of the career soldiers in the Beltway.¹¹³ An OSS staff psychologist described Donovan as one who "possessed the power to visualize an oak when he saw an acorn...For him the day was never sufficient unto itself; it was always teeming with seeds of a boundless future...Every completed project bred a host of new ones."

By June 13, 1942, the division charged with propaganda fell under the direction of the Office of War Information, with the rest of the COI becoming the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). Plainly put by the President himself, the purpose of this organization was to:

Take all measures...to enforce our will upon the enemy by means other than military action, as may be applied in support of actual or planned military operation; or in furtherance of the war effort; unorthodox warfare, guerrilla activities behind enemy lines; contact with resistance groups; subversion, sabotage, and unorthodox or 'black' psychological warfare.

With that directive, the President offered a direct line of communication to Donovan, with the majority of the money procured being undocumented with the following vote of confidence: "If I'm going to trust you with the secrets of the country, I can trust you with the money too."¹¹⁴

Getting straight to work, the OSS was originally manned with Donovan's old connections such as Ivy League graduates, those from his past in business, and names that connoted American royalty such as Mellon, Morgan, Vanderbilt, and Du Pont. In addition, actors, writers,

¹¹²Edward Hymoff, *The OSS in World War II* (New York: Richardson & Steirman, 1986), 24.

¹¹³Smith, *OSS: The Secret History of America's First Central Intelligence Agency*, 2.

¹¹⁴Pearson, *The Wolves at the Door: The True Story of America's Greatest Female Spy*, 171.

and athletes were brought in, making the OSS one of the most diverse organizations in the U.S. government. The wide spectrum of recruits brought with it ridicule from the outside, as names such as “Oh, So Secret,” “Oh, So Silly,” and “Oh, So Social” were used to ridicule this perpetually misunderstood organization.¹¹⁵

Despite his confidence, Donovan was no stranger to the British agencies that inspired the creation of his organization. When researching what made the ideal agent, Ian Fleming, the future creator of James Bond and an officer in British Naval Intelligence, informed Donovan that he should seek those with “absolute discretion, sobriety, devotion to duty, languages, and wide experience,” and who were aged between forty and fifty. However, being the unorthodox visionary that he was, Donovan sought a balance to the sobriety Fleming recommended, by seeking out youngsters who were “calculatingly reckless” with “disciplined daring” and who were “trained for aggressive action,” as well as those with a sordid past but marketable skills such as former thieves, safecrackers, forgers, circus performers, and Communists.¹¹⁶

Wasting no time in proving that the OSS was more than just a social organization of the educated, wealthy, and miscreants of American society, the OSS embarked on its first mission on 8 November 1942 in Vichy-controlled North Africa in support of Operation Torch with the task of recruiting a resistance force that would aid the allies in their invasion. Additionally, they recruited the help of ten thousand Arab leaders with the liberal use of the aforementioned undocumented money promised by the President himself. With their skills of psychological warfare and propaganda, a false plan was purposely leaked to the Germans that told of an invasion force that would land at Dakar in Senegal. Once the fleet was under way and the code

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 171.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 171.

phrase “Robert arrive” was heard, the Nazis were caught by surprise when the Allies instead landed on Morocco and Algeria, a full fifteen hundred miles from the falsely broadcast location.

Once the main invasion force gained a foothold in Morocco and began its movement west, the OSS inserted its Research and Development Department in order to counter any future Nazi counterattack on ground that had already been taken by the Allies. However, long before Operation Torch even took place, Donovan had tasked Lieutenant Colonel William Eddy with helping set the stage. A decorated Marine Corps veteran from World War I, President of Hobart College in upstate New York, and well versed in both diplomacy and fluent in Arabic (he was born in Lebanon and had served as the Naval Attaché in Cairo) Eddy was tasked with the following instructions by Donovan that he described in a memo to President Roosevelt on 22 December, 1941:

That the aid of native chiefs be obtained, the loyalty of the inhabitants be cultivated, fifth columnists organized and placed, demolition materials cached, and guerilla bands of bold and daring men organized and installed. [Furthermore] to maintain a line of demarcation, in so far as practicable, between operations and intelligence.¹¹⁷

Contrary to the trend of “bigger, faster, and more destructive” that was gaining popularity in the war effort, the OSS found the solution to the problem of ensuring that the enemy could not try to counterattack the Allies in a ubiquitous and benign substance of the desert: camel dung. “They launched the idea of developing explosive camel dung to be scattered by the Americans as they vacated an area. When Nazi Field Marshall Erwin Rommel’s unsuspecting tanks drove over it, they would be left severely damaged, thereby critically slowing his advance.”¹¹⁸ This creativity led to quick success on the battlefield and in turn, saved the lives of numerous conventional forces. Such tactics allowed Donovan to silence his critics, and opened the door to more missions

¹¹⁷ Thomas Lippman, *Arabian Knight: Colonel Bill Eddy USMC and the Rise of American Power in the Middle East* (St. Vista, CA: Selwa Press, 2008), 63-4.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 64.

in numerous locations.¹¹⁹ With such experience in actual operations, the OSS came to resemble a well-oiled machine consisting of some of the most diverse and unique cogs in the American war effort:

While a professor in Washington was studying the transportation system in France, an ex-Hollywood cameraman was making movies of war crimes for the benefit of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a sergeant in Washington was drawing a chart for the use of generals in Kandy, an Italian-speaking American was parachuting into the area of the Brenner Pass, and a major in London was cabling home in secret code, asking about his promotion.¹²⁰

Looking to balance the unorthodox personnel with experienced and mature agents, the OSS was pleased to hear that Virginia Hall was still seeking a way to get back into France and continue what she had started with the SOE. Upon hearing that Captain David Bruce had been put in charge of the London office of the OSS, she now knew where that opportunity might come from. Since the OSS and SOE were at this time working directly with each other, and with her new wireless communication training serving as yet another characteristic of her professionalism as an agent, the chance to switch to the American effort now required far fewer bureaucratic hurdles.

Buckmaster was not only displeased about the prospect of losing such a qualified agent from F Section, but was also concerned for her safety; however, the same professionalism that made her such a desired agent was the same trait that reassured him that she would be in no more danger than anyone else despite having a bounty out by the Gestapo, especially with the help of the rapid advancements in disguises. After getting his blessing, an OSS officer signed off on her request to transfer in March of 1944, and she returned to France shortly thereafter under the alias Diane.

¹¹⁹ Pearson, *The Wolves at the Door: The True Story of America's Greatest Female Spy*, 172.

¹²⁰ Stewart Alsop and Thomas Braden, *Sub Rosa: The OSS and American Espionage* (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1948), 1.

Virginia Hall's return to France with the OSS

Now with the OSS, Hall's mission was to assist the recently formed French Forces of the Interior with the coordination and execution of the resistance efforts. This despite a price on her head and a Nazi pledge to "find and destroy her." Dressed as a feeble old woman with her hair dyed a dirty gray, pulled tightly into a bun and covered by a ragged babushka, she struck an unrecognizable figure in the streets of the northwestern city of Brittany as she ambled slowly beneath layers of clothing to cover her figure, and topped it all off with woolen blouses and a long skirt. Her noticeable limp caused by her artificial left leg (which she had long ago named Cuthbert) could not be eliminated, but it was altered as Hall taught herself to change her gait to a shuffle, which was appropriate for her assumed age.¹²¹

Though most agents entered France by parachute, Virginia Hall was forced to infiltrate France from aboard a Navy supplied Motor Gun Boat, MGB 502.¹²² Upon her arrival outside of Brittany, she was whisked away with a sixty-two year old agent named Aramis to a safe house that had been set up before their arrival. The next day, she boarded a train and went south to Crozant where she met her escort, Mr. Lopinat. Neither a declared member of the resistance nor a Nazi sympathizer, he had been selected by the Resistance for his concise speech and quiet demeanor and was charged with finding Hall, still dressed as an old woman, a place to stay. Her new home was as sparse as one would imagine a place that needed to remain hidden in plain sight, a simple cottage with one room owned by Lopinat at the other side of the village from his farmhouse that lacked running water and electricity. Upon the conclusion of the meeting, Aramis went to Paris for his mission, which provided a fair amount of relief for Hall, who "thought he talked too much and was somewhat indiscreet, two qualities that could bring a quick

¹²¹ Pearson. *The Wolves at the Door: The True Story of America's Greatest Female Spy*, 3.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 177.

and painful end to an OSS agent,” and an example of the problems faced by such a new organization that constantly had to find a balance between finding the perfect candidate and completing their mission.¹²³

In order to keep up the image of a simple farmwoman, Hall performed household chores for the Lopinat family such as cooking for the family, and the cows served as a clever cover for her most important activity in her role as an agent. Every evening, she opened the suitcase she had carried to Brittany exposing the Type 3 Mark II transceiver inside. Hall used the device in order to transmit messages to London, giving accurate descriptions and coordinates of the large fields she had located during the day while moving Lopinat’s cows to and from pasture. The suitcase remained hidden in the loft of the cottage when not in use, and the pasture served as a parachute drop zone both for agents and supplies in direct support of the growing ranks in the Resistance. Fully aware that there were Nazis specifically tasked with compromising the radio transmitters with the use of direction finders, Hall had to send, receive, and relocate positions as quickly as possible and often found herself mere minutes ahead of Gestapo agents in search of her position.¹²⁴

Such was the life of Virginia Hall in France for several months, as well as leading acts of sabotage and subversion, until returning from another transmission in the pasture, when she saw three men and a woman hung from iron fence posts, spiked through the neck, and left there as a reminder to all who resisted the Nazi regime. That night, she sent her last message to London before once again evading the Nazis in another daring escape back to London: “The wolves are at the door.”¹²⁵

¹²³ Ibid., 3.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 3-4.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 4.

~~SECRET~~

12 May 1945

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

Miss Virginia Hall, an American civilian working for this agency in the European Theater of Operations, has been awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against the enemy.

We understand that Miss Hall is the first civilian woman in this war to receive the Distinguished Service Cross.

Despite the fact that she was well known to the Gestapo, Miss Hall voluntarily returned to France in March 1944 to assist in sabotage operations against the Germans. Through her courage and physical endurance, even though she had previously lost a leg in an accident, Miss Hall, with two American officers, succeeded in organizing, arming and training three FFI Battalions which took part in many engagements with the enemy and a number of acts of sabotage, resulting in the demolition of many bridges, the destruction of a number of supply trains, and the disruption of enemy communications. As a result of the demolition of one bridge, a German convoy was ambushed and during a bitter struggle 150 Germans were killed and 500 were captured. In addition Miss Hall provided radio communication between London Headquarters and the Resistance Forces in the Haute Loire Department, transmitting and receiving operational and intelligence information. This was the most dangerous type of work as the enemy, whenever

Declassified by 60781-1
date 15 February 78

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Figure 3

Memorandum for the President from William J. Donovan regarding the Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) Award to Virginia Hall, 05/12/1945; Hall was the only civilian woman to earn the Distinguished Service Cross in World War II.

¹²⁶ <http://www.archives.gov/historical-docs/todays-doc/?dod-date=512>

Chapter 3: **Maquisards and the Allied Clandestine Services**

“Because it was a matter of choice and not conscription, resistance had to create its national image from the actions and ideas of a minority. Because it was not the product of a union sacrée of party politics it had to formulate its own galvanizing ethic.”¹²⁷

-Rod Kedward

On 16 February 1943, the Service du Travail Obligatoire (STO) Law was enacted in France, thus destroying Pétain’s goal of maintaining near-autonomy by having families in France support the war effort in place of prisoners of war. The STO law enforced compulsory labor in Germany, and ultimately forced countless French citizens who had once been on the fence, to fall to the side of the Resistance. However, this is not to say that active resistance action increased at this moment, but rather that cases of civil disobedience rose exponentially.¹²⁸

In the few months that followed the enactment of the STO Law, the law left very little room for alternative service, but administrators of rural areas protested against the high number of people the law demanded, and an administrative nightmare ensued in urban areas. Consequently in Marseilles, a mere 486 of the 866 conscripted checked in for shipment to Germany. Due to medical collusion, 250 of the 486 were deemed unfit for transport. Furthermore, entire busloads of conscripts slowly emptied at every stop since only one gendarme typically guarded them, and a temporary safe house could easily be found in most towns and villages that they drove through. By the summer of 1943, a rift in society was created as *réfractaires* (the name given to those who refused to comply) and those sympathetic to their plight openly defied the Vichy officials who claimed that compulsory service was their patriotic

¹²⁷ Kedward, *La Vie en Bleu: France and the French since 1900*, 292.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 295.

duty. Accordingly, *réfractaires* on the run could count on an elaborate chain of citizens to help with their evasion, as they became welcome help on farms during the harvest. When one considers that much of the rural gendarmerie was turning a blind-eye to those evading conscription as well, it is no wonder that in the Breton Côtes-du-Nord alone, there was a shortage of approximately three thousand conscripts.¹²⁹

No longer able to just remain anonymous and work to provide for their families, young men began disappearing in droves into the maquis, a Corsican term denoting the dense shrubs that grew in the mountains. Shortly after, the term shifted from merely a description of the terrain to the name of the roving bands of young men living in the areas in hiding, or in growing numbers, forming resistance units.

Beginning in the winter of 1942-43, refugees and resisters created hidden camps scattered through the wilderness; with the introduction of the STO, the number of camps steadily increased. As the numbers grew, local population centers could not ignore the growing number of Vichy-declared outlaws, whether they were Jews or resisters, and forced them to make decisions of their own, because it was only a matter of time before Gestapo, Milice (the Vichy equivalent to the Nazi Gestapo) or SS officers knocked on their door demanding information. In effect, it was those who risked everything by denying what they knew that allowed the Maquisards especially, and the Resistance more generally to become distinct and proficient units.¹³⁰

With regards to the number of *réfractaires* who chose active resistance (as opposed to those who simply wanted to avoid conscription), the percentages varied from region to region ranging from as little as three percent to as high as fifty percent. The number was highly

¹²⁹ Ibid., 295.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 296.

dependent on the organization and discipline of the respective groups; in the Cévennes in the south and the Côtes-du-Nord in Brittany, the percentage that was ready to actively resist was high. On the other hand, in places such as Haute-Saône, it was decidedly absent due to the Maquis being accused of petty crimes and theft, and the local population was unwilling to protect any outsiders on the lam. As such, historian Rod Kedward was careful to ensure the realization that:

Nowhere was there a lack of local concern over the impact of armed bands in the vicinity: people divided sharply over the spiral of violence and the reality of reprisals that ensued. Both acceptance and fears of armed resistance (*la lutte armée*) make the the history of the Maquis not just one of men in the woods, but of the communities that supported or rejected them.¹³¹

Just as organization was seen as a key necessity by Moulin and de Gaulle immediately after the Occupation began, so too was it important for the Maquis to unite, both to increase the effects of their missions, and to increase their own security. Taking advantage of this new pool of candidates, both the Gaullist Armée Secrète (AS) and the Communist FTP created their own Maquis units while delegating the command to those who actually formed the units in the first place so as to mitigate any problems in loyalty. Unlike the Free French, very few of the FTP Maquis had any formal military training and they were still left to their own devices when it came to what to sabotage, and when to do it. This was a symptom of the fact that their leaders did not formally support the Resistance until after the Soviet Union was attacked in June 1941, so they were behind in both training and experience compared to their non-Communist counterparts.¹³² As for the AS, there were more former officers in the ranks, but that caused a problem of its own because conventional forces were not likely to be adept at the unconventional nature of the Maquis' missions, and their adherence to rank likely annoyed many of their

¹³¹ Ibid., 296-7.

¹³² Chambard, *The Maquis: A History of the French Resistance Movement*, 15.

comrades who could not be bothered by such formalities. Regardless of affiliation, if one had an affiliation at all, units remained small, agile, and highly mobile, all necessary traits for both security and mission accomplishment in an environment where groups of men not at work would draw suspicion of anyone who saw them.¹³³

In most cases, wherever a climate of resistance proved formidable, two factors worked to the advantage of the resisters: local mayors were often resigned to the presence of the Resistance in their midst and geography often made it difficult for Vichy administrators to penetrate the Resistance communities. This was evident, for example, in Corsica, which was liberated in early October 1943. Two and a half years earlier in April 1941, a Free French fighter named Fred Scamaroni had been sent to Corsica in order to organize a Resistance group there. Predominantly Communist in its make-up, progress was accelerated with the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, and the Corsican National Front was formally created under the leadership of Arthur Giovani. Careful to emphasize the patriotic nature of their cause rather than their politics, the incorporation of Henri Maillot in its command structure helped legitimize them due to the fact that not only was he not a Communist, but he was also a relative of Charles de Gaulle, and therefore provided the necessary liaison between them and the movement in Lyon. Likewise, Giovani was able to make liaison with the non-Communist Libération group in Marseilles.¹³⁴

Just as in the rest of France, where resistance efforts could be found though in small numbers before the installation of the STO laws, Corsica was no different. However, in October 1941, the numbers began increasing quickly when the Germans executed forty-eight French hostages as reprisal for the assassination of a German colonel.¹³⁵ With numbers increasing steadily, the need for organization increased as well, and ultimate command fell to Henri Giraud

¹³³ Kedward, *La Vie en Bleu: France and the French since 1900*, 297.

¹³⁴ Chambard, *The Maquis: A History of the French Resistance Movement*, 67.

¹³⁵ Stafford, *Secret Agent: The True Story of the Covert War against Hitler*, 189.

who was in Algiers, and was a General in the French military who had escaped German imprisonment with the aid of the SOE over a year earlier. His non-Communist politics and relationship with the SOE were also not a coincidence in his selection as his role of commander.

In November 1942, the *Casabianca*, a rare submarine that was able to escape destruction in the southern French port of Toulon, docked in Algiers and immediately made contact with French Intelligence in order to begin preparations for Operation Pearl Harbor which was a mission to bring Allied intelligence agents to Corsica. Aboard the submarine were Commander de Saule of the Air Force's Intelligence Service, an American OSS agent, two French noncommissioned officers, and a radio technician. With the need to approach the island stealthily, they moved slowly and were careful not to even turn on the fresh air ventilators and the exhaust fans despite being submerged for the majority of the trip for fear of being detected. Finally, on 5 February 1943, the *Casabianca* arrived in the Bay of Arone with the first batch of its initial supply consisting of 450 Sten guns and 60,000 rounds of ammunition for the Resistance. Down the beach on Saleccia, the submarine dropped off another thirteen tons of equipment on 3 July, and another twenty tons of equipment was dropped off on the evening of 31 July in Saleccia despite having to brave heavy fire upon being detected by the Italian garrison stationed on Corsica.¹³⁶

Back on mainland France on 21 June, the Gestapo caught up to one of the earliest leaders of the Resistance, Jean Moulin, who was compromised by someone in his own circles. Lucie Aubrac, whose husband, Raymond, was arrested along with Moulin and a prominent member of the Resistance herself, speculated that the incident occurred when a phone call to the police station at Saône Quay indicated that the caller had helped a man whose arm was bleeding to walk to a "certain address." Rushing to the location, the police found a young man who said he had

¹³⁶ Chambard, *The Maquis: A History of the French Resistance Movement*, 68-9.

escaped during an arrest made by the Gestapo in Caluire, and he was hastily taken to the hospital for treatment. After taking a report on the incident, they left him in the section reserved for prisoners, potentially for his own security more than for the sake of imprisonment. After being suspicious of such a relatively easy “escape” from the persistent Gestapo and upon talking to her friends, Aubrac realized that he was the man they did not know that was brought along by a friend at a previous Resistance meeting that planned the meeting where Moulin was arrested. No one could ever be sure that he was the mole in their organization, but he was never seen again, demonstrating that even trusted associates of friends had to be properly vetted even when discussing routine meetings.¹³⁷

Later that week, Aubrac did the unthinkable: to find out the whereabouts of her husband, and by extension, Jean Moulin, she arranged to meet the Butcher of Lyon, Klaus Barbie, in his office. Posing as a hysterical and unmarried pregnant woman, she was able to confirm that both Moulin and Aubrac had indeed been arrested, but Barbie informed her that both had been arrested as Gaullists. Due to her seemingly ignorant demeanor and pregnancy, she was merely shown the door, but not without Barbie granting her husband permission to be married due to a strange law that allowed for prisoners condemned to death to be married before their execution.¹³⁸ During the day of the ceremony on 21 October, the Resistance group that Aubrac led ambushed the Nazi convoy that transported her husband, and saved Raymond from certain execution.¹³⁹

Moulin was not so lucky, and was taken to the École de Santé Militaire where Klaus Barbie personally tortured him. After three weeks of brutal torture, during which he divulged no secrets, he finally succumbed to his wounds. In the end, Barbie gained nothing, while the

¹³⁷ Lucie Aubrac, *Outwitting the Gestapo* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 77.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 79-81.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 159-167

Resistance gained a martyr, and a reminder of their own potential fate if the Occupation was allowed to persist.¹⁴⁰

Back on Corsica, Scamaroni's communications were intercepted soon after the supply-drop of 31 July, thus allowing the Italians to triangulate his position. After enduring long periods of torture without disclosing anything of note, he successfully committed suicide, and the Italians were left unaware as to who he even was, let alone information that could be used to halt the plans of the Resistance. His death also left an opening for the Communist National Front to gain influence, something that leaders in London and Algiers were careful to avoid.

Ordered to replace Scamaroni with the task of coordinating the Resistance was Commander Colonna d'Istria who went by the name Césari. By 8 September, his greatest task was controlling the Resistance after word of Italy's surrender came to Corsica. Emboldened by the news of the Allied success, the Communists of the National Front sought to exploit the good news by spurring an uprising without coordinating with the other members of the Resistance. Looking to avoid the sure chaos that would ensue from random offensives coming from only a portion of the Resistance, General Giraud addressed the Corsicans by stating, "Please tell the patriots that I am counting on them not to act prematurely." Meanwhile, Césari addressed General Magli, the commander of the four Italian divisions on Corsica: "Let me know unequivocally before midnight tonight whether you are with us, against us, or neutral." Magli answered succinctly: "With you."¹⁴¹

Despite the fact that the Allied forces' principal objective remained on the Italian mainland, and therefore they could not support the Resistance on Corsica, Giraud kept pressing his leaders in London for help. In a message to General Henry Martin, Giraud reported:

¹⁴⁰ Pearson, *The Wolves at the Door: The True Story of America's Greatest Female Spy*, 166.

¹⁴¹ Chambard, *The Maquis: A History of the French Resistance Movement*, 72.

The Patriots, whom we've been arming for the past several months, have revolted. They're asking for help. Many people here regard their action as premature. The Germans continue to hold Sardina. They have from 10,000 to 15,000 men with tanks in Corsica. But the signing of an armistice by the Italians has dealt them a blow. If we allow them to recoup, our Corsican compatriots may suffer terrible reprisals, and we will have lost a chance that will not soon recur.¹⁴²

Despite having only five French warships in the Mediterranean, three of which were submarines, Operation Vesuvius was now underway. On 10 September, weapons and ammunition were distributed to the Maquis and shortly after, a force of two hundred raided a munitions and oil complex in Champlan, inflicting heavy casualties upon the enemy in doing so, and forcing the Germans to retreat to Bonifacio at the southern border of Corsica. Three days later, a force consisting of a so-called shock battalion, the Fourth Moroccan Alpine Division, and a number of reservists, was tasked with establishing a beachhead, with the shock battalion landing that day in order to link up with Maquis units already in place.

Acts of sabotage on infrastructure delayed German withdrawals and advances, as Maquis and Italian units continued to press the attack, and on 21 September, General Giraud met the Italian General Magli at his headquarters in order to coordinate the Italian military's new mission of providing transportation, facilities, and artillery in support of the Allied landing that would occur two weeks later.

Even in such a decisive success for the allies and the Resistance, the Maquis of the FTP and the Gaullist AS took distinct strategies that were not entirely mutually beneficial. The FTP Maquis stayed in close proximity to towns and population centers, likely because their political philosophy put an equal emphasis on seeking support for their political cause as seeking support for their acts of resistance. On the other hand, the Gaullist AS units stayed in the hills and stuck to actions that would create an increase in numbers in anticipation for coordination with Allied

¹⁴² Ibid., 74.

landing forces, a lofty goal that speaks largely to de Gaulle's desire for prestige on the Allied stage, as opposed to the FTP's desire to influence those within the borders of France in anticipation of the power-struggle that would likely take place after France was liberated.¹⁴³ In either case, neither group was seen by the clandestine services as an ideal ally to fully commit the resources and manpower necessary for them to accomplish the primary goal of the Allies and their clandestine services: the unconditional defeat of the Germans.

Defending the merits of Sabotage over Bombings in Preparation for the Invasion

*"...and now we are reduced to the most atrocious fate: to be killed without killing back, to be killed by friends without being able to kill our enemies."*¹⁴⁴
-Maurice Schumann in an evening broadcast from London after the air raid on Renault in 1942

From 1942 to 1943, the BBC attempted to convince French citizens that bombing raids on their country's railroads, ports, factories, and runways were necessary to the war effort, despite the fact that doing so would kill countless French citizens. On 3 March 1942, a bombing raid on the Renault factories in Paris killed 620, and despite warnings that the French should evacuate their homes near the port of Lorient, sixty-five were killed, and after subsequent bombings, the town was rendered uninhabitable. All the while, Pétain and the Vichy administration condemned the allied raids as criminal, and though most French citizens rolled their eyes at such accusations when they knew what Vichy and German authorities were doing to their own citizens, it did not make it any easier to accept the fact that in the eyes of the Allied commanders, French citizens were now being relegated to the status of mere collateral damage in efforts toward their own liberation.

¹⁴³ Kedward. *La Vie en Bleu: France and the French since 1900*. 297-8.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 298.

Nevertheless, unaffiliated citizens and Resistance members alike made it a point to demonstrate their commitment by daringly aiding the rescue and escape of allied aircrews shot down over France despite the hasty encroachment of Nazi and Vichy troops looking to get to the aircrew first. Likewise, expressions of gratitude can be found in countless conversations towards those Ally aircrews that flew low and slow at night to drop off arms and equipment to aid the Resistance. All the while, Allied agents in France and members of the Resistance spoke passionately on the benefits of acts of targeted and limited sabotage as opposed to the often inaccurate bombing raids that would lead to approximately 50,000 deaths by 6 June 1944.¹⁴⁵

As dangerous as the sabotage missions were, the STO proved to steel the resolve of the most daring citizens, and seal the lips of those who did not partake but were still knowledgeable of the acts. In order to mitigate the increase in numbers unwilling to cooperate with Vichy, the administration offered amnesty to any *réfractaires*, and some took advantage of the offer. With those who were not fully committed now voluntarily removed from their ranks, the offer of amnesty left the most devoted still in the units while proving inconsequential on their official rolls.

The harsh winter of 1943-44 proved to be as productive for the Maquis as it was miserable. Since they could no longer forage for food in the wild, they were forced to come down from the hills and mountains into the villages both to escape the frigid temperatures as well as to find sustenance. As such, the Maquisards who were allowed into the villages were taken care of by the citizens who provided shelter, food, intelligence, and medical assistance thus increasing the proficiency and organization of the local units. In January 1944, their unity and proficiency were put to the test as 465 Maquisards ascended on the plateau of Glières in southern France with the logistical aid of locals. On this position, Allied aircrews flew low in the night to

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 298-9.

drop arms and equipment in anticipation of a large-scale offensive against German troops, Vichy police, and the Milice. However, despite their enthusiasm, these Maquis positions were quickly compromised, and by late March, they were encircled and defeated by the same enemies they sought to harass.¹⁴⁶

Three good things did, however come from this defeat: First, it demonstrated that France was not defeated and that the Resistance was growing in daring and effect. Next, it reminded the fighting units that their best bet at success was avoiding direct offensives in favor of raids, ambushes, sabotage, and reconnaissance. Third, volunteers to join the Resistance increased, as the knowledge that there were already units that had done the difficult task of organization appealed to those who lacked the initiative to do so, but did not lack the desire to contribute. With this increase in numbers, some leaders began thinking of bold plans that would aid the much-anticipated Allied landing on occupied France. Accordingly, they began campaigning London for heavy-weapons such as large machine guns and artillery so as to attack any Germans on the retreat, or delay German reinforcements en route to support those in contact with the Allies.

With the merits and dedication of the Resistance now supported by actions, the time was ripe for the OSS and the SOE to increase their influence in France by exploiting it even further; in turn, the number of agents soon increased, as did their activities.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 299.

Different Processes to achieve Different Goals: The Long Road to Unity

“...[the Communists’] numbers were formidable, which was what the rest of the Resistance feared. To many, the thought of a postwar Communist France was almost as great a nightmare to them as the one they were living. Virginia’s [Virginia Hall] opinion was that the whole lot of them should forgo their political leanings and fight as a united front. It was a maddening waste of everyone’s time and energies. There would be plenty of time to sort it all out once they had driven out the Nazis.”¹⁴⁷

Upon his arrival in London, Charles de Gaulle seemed determined not to be perceived as a mere puppet of the British. So convinced of his own leadership prowess and expertise, a Frenchman living in London during the war was overheard remarking that de Gaulle “ought to remember that the enemy is Germany, not the British.” In order to establish his identity as the leader of France, and not merely a lower commander in the ranks of the British, he quickly established the Bureau Central de Renseignements et d’Action (BCRA), which was charged with the responsibility of organizing and leading the Resistance, despite the British carrying out the mission themselves. Compounding the friction caused by political rivalries in France was the fact that the British were forbidden from recruiting members of the Resistance into their ranks in London, a task that fell to the RF unit under de Gaulle’s command, thus creating an unnecessary break in the succession of command in an already perplexing command structure.¹⁴⁸

If de Gaulle’s relationship with the British was at times tenuous, then his relationship with the Americans was confounding early in the war due to the fact that President Roosevelt had officially recognized Vichy France in his attempt to stay out of the troubles occurring in Europe before the attack on Pearl Harbor. However, once the United States became involved, the OSS sought to soften this rough start by taking the time to ensure it was an eclectic group of men and women who were specifically screened so as to avoid those who were too far left or right in their politics, though the best they could manage was a sizeable minority who were by all

¹⁴⁷ Pearson, *The Wolves at the Door: The True Story of America's Greatest Female Spy*, 217.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 165.

accounts apolitical. These agents agreed with their commander, Colonel Donovan, who believed that their principal mission should be victory over the Nazis. Simply put, they wanted to focus on destroying their enemy, and were repeatedly disappointed when colleagues and Resistance members injected politics into their operations. William Morgan, a psychologist trained at Yale and a Major in the OSS recalled his anger at his Maquis unit whenever ideology intruded into the mission of liberating their country by stating, “I did not care whether they were Socialists or Communists, free-thinkers or atheists. My orders were to lead them against the Germans.”¹⁴⁹

As early as January 1942, Colonel Nicol Smith, a Choate and Stanford graduate who was as wealthy as he was witty, found himself in France under the cover of a “cultural attaché” due to the fact that the State Department was still maintaining diplomatic relations with Vichy. Demonstrative of the lack of coordination between government agencies that would plague the OSS for the duration of the war, the State Department betrayed his cover by informing Vichy that he would use his position as a cover for his real purpose of espionage. Consequently, he was justifiably concerned that his cover had been blown, relating his thoughts in a letter that demonstrated the thoughts that were likely held by thousands of other agents operating in enemy territory for the duration of the war:

Vichy is mad. That is the Vichy one sees but there is another that lies just below the surface. On all sides are members of the German Gestapo. You find them at bars. They are seated next to you at the opera... You expect to find them in your bed and perhaps you would not be far wrong... Nearly every servant at the hotel is in the pay of either the Germans or the French... I have received anonymous letters to have this or that place blown up. All sorts of traps have been prepared. Foreign ladies of a type never to have noticed me in the past, in fact of a type to have avoided me, now find me irresistible. I have met an enormous number of people and am asked out constantly to dine and to lunch. I drink two bottles of Vichy water a day to neutralize the effects of this generosity.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ Smith, *OSS: The Secret History of America's First Central Intelligence Agency*, 19.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 45.

Despite his paranoia, whether real or perceived, Smith was still able to find a sizeable amount of pro-Allied sentiment outside of the occupied zone, eager to give him intelligence in response to the growing despair felt by the majority of France's citizens, as well as in response to the apprehension of the local Jewish populations. However, many chose to embrace the enemy they knew out of fear of the enemy that awaited, and hence preferred to defend the present fascist state over that of the Communists in Russia, demonstrating yet again the political rifts still apparent when many assumed that such differences would be put aside, until France's liberation.

The problem of the rising numbers of anti-Communists in the Resistance was compounded by the small numbers of pro-Gaullists within the OSS, making for a difficult route to be traversed when one considers that at this time the organization, training, and equipping of the Resistance was the OSS's main objective in France, yet the two largest groups of Resistance were fraught with rivalries. In the summer of 1942, Donovan reported to President Roosevelt of the wretched condition of the whole Free French movement, and official reports described the Gaullist delegation in Washington as "wracked by internal dissension, intrigue, and petty bickering." "De Gaullism is simply the expression of one man's ambition," noted one former French General, and the head of the OSS office in New York City, Allen Dulles, lamented how difficult it was to get important French exiles rallied behind the cause.

Despite a low opinion of de Gaulle held by nearly everyone but himself, the fact remained that he was still the only leader in a position to inspire the devotion of those on both the left and the right in France, and that due to the past wavering loyalties of other French leaders, there was "a very serious risk that the leaders of the best organized resistance groups would look upon any movement led by...other Generals who have ridden along with Vichy, as merely representing the Vichy ideology under a somewhat different cloak—an attempt to save

the regime and maintain its elements in power.” With this in mind, W. Arthur Roseborough, the head of the Western Europe desk, recommended that the OSS support the Gaullists, while reconciling the other Resistance groups in France in hopes to unite the factions into a single, mutually supportive resistance effort. While many supported this sentiment, Churchill and Roosevelt simply could not trust the Gaullists’ system of information and intelligence security, and with the impending Allied landing for Operation Torch on 8 November 1942, demanded that de Gaulle not be informed of the operation until after the landings had begun.¹⁵¹

Aftermath of Operation Torch: A Tenuous Unity in the Resistance is formed

With Operation Torch complete, Churchill and Roosevelt met in Casablanca with hopes to alleviate the rivalry between Henri Giraud and Charles de Gaulle. All that came from it was an icy handshake between the two, and de Gaulle returned to London while Giraud remained in Algiers. For the Allies, the goal of uniting the devoted fighters of the two leaders remained unaccomplished but still a priority. However, while rivalries at the highest levels of French command were indeed real and intense, the fighters at the small-unit level could still sometimes put aside their differences in recognition that they were both fighting for France, albeit in different ways. One such instance was 15 April 1943, when more than 200 officers of French and British nationality sat down to a banquet to celebrate Foreign Legion Day, a day that had been celebrated without interruption for more than one-hundred years. As the celebration went on, a telegram of good wishes was even sent to the Vichy-French troops in Morocco, and for at least one evening, unity at the ground level of the war seemed to extend to all that partook in the battles thus far.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 55-56.

¹⁵² Hasey, Dineen, *Yankee Fighter*, 256-57.

Meanwhile, OSS representatives reported the disturbing remainder of Vichy influences in Giraudist Africa. Consequently, politics were once again embroiled into strategy, and the Allies turned to de Gaulle to effect the necessary changes in North Africa, out of fear that the people there would turn Communist in opposition. This turmoil existed between the two Generals up to and beyond the liberation of Corsica, though with clever diplomacy and strategy, the Allies, the OSS, and the SOE still employed the Resistance with varying degrees of success.

Back in London, rivalries and suspicion were not just a French affair, as the OSS and SOE were finding it increasingly difficult to work together as well. To the SOE's credit, they had already been operating clandestinely in France for two years by 1943, and had subsequently established a large network of informants and operatives in the Resistance. Therefore, it was justifiably difficult to embrace the comparatively new American organization as equals. Furthermore, the OSS had not only the British to contend with but also the exiled intelligence agencies of Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and most important France, all of whom were already located in London. Continuing their press forward, the OSS paid particular interest in the development of a relationship with de Gaulle's BCRA and its commander, André Dewavrin, who went by the name Colonel Passy. In this relationship, the Americans were willing to ignore Passy's conservative politics, even despite allegations of being particularly harsh towards French exiles who did not express loyalty to de Gaulle. However, as was the trend, the Americans once again found themselves frustrated by the BCRA's insistence on inserting politics into clandestine operations, a symptom of the fact that unlike all the other exiled governments and intelligence services in London, de Gaulle's Free French were still not recognized as a government in exile by Roosevelt. Consequently, the political rhetoric according to de Gaulle, was as necessary as the operations they participated in, because once France was

liberated, the BCRA's next mission was to unify all of France under the leadership of de Gaulle.¹⁵³

Nevertheless, Donovan played the game of politics only enough to ensure the OSS gained the access inherent with working with the SOE. Unfortunately, by doing so, the OSS also inherited many of the diplomatic problems that the SOE had been dealing with for years due to de Gaulle's annoyance with the SOE having a separate F Section operation in France apart from his native-only RF Section.¹⁵⁴ Maurice Buckmaster, the head of F Section, sought to create this group entirely separate from the influences of the BCRA for reasons that involved politics (What if de Gaulle is not recognized as the leader of France?) and security (The members of the BCRA have not all been properly vetted, so to entrust them with classified information runs the risk of failed missions). As such, Buckmaster coordinated the efforts of over four hundred non-Gaullist agents into France such as Virginia Hall, and this never sat well with Passy. This suspicion of the BCRA was assuaged however with time, especially as the Resistance proved to be moving towards recognition of de Gaulle as their leader thanks to the aforementioned efforts of Jean Moulin a few months earlier in February of 1943.¹⁵⁵

The OSS made major headway upon hearing of the introduction of the STO law in 1943. With thousands of citizens in France taking to the mountains in order to avoid compulsory labor, many of who did not belong to the Resistance, a previously untapped pool of potential recruits inspired the OSS to request the Gaullists in London permission to offer substantial amounts of money to anyone on the run in exchange for information and intelligence.

However, the BCRA did not approve the request, as they assumed that the Americans' offer of support was a backhanded attempt at raising the prestige of Giraud, who, like many of

¹⁵³ Smith, *OSS: The Secret History of America's First Central Intelligence Agency*, 166-7.

¹⁵⁴ Stafford, *Secret Agent: The True Story of the Covert War against Hitler*, 188.

¹⁵⁵ Blake Ehrlich, *Resistance: France 1940-1945* (Little, Brown and Company: New York, 1965), 54.

the Maquisards, was not directly affiliated with de Gaulle. This belief was strengthened due to the fact that the idea of compensation for intelligence was that of a French journalist named Guillaïn de Benouville, a Catholic conservative with a right-wing past who had long since expressed loyalty to de Gaulle. In fact, Benouville was compelled to work with the Americans because:

Our American friends had, in effect, declared with some vehemence that the only thing that interested them was that we should fight the war. They repeated again and again that it made not the slightest difference to them whether we were partisans of one French general or the other. Since we declared that General de Gaulle was our chief and our federator, our American friends unhesitatingly accepted our point of view as a basis for a working agreement with us.¹⁵⁶

Despite the countless examples of suspicion, on 30 May 1943, de Gaulle at last accepted the proposition initially posed by Roosevelt and Churchill at Casablanca, and joined Giraud in the formation of a united French Committee of National Liberation. The timing could not have been more perfect, as at this time, the Gestapo began a concerted effort to crush the increasingly organized Resistance, resulting in the aforementioned torture and death of Jean Moulin, and that of the commander of de Gaulle's Armée Secrète, General Delestraint. Even more demonstrative of the brilliance in timing were the events occurring in Washington D.C. at the exact same time, where the Combined Chiefs of Staff began to discuss their first commitment to the joint-invasion of occupied France.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶ Smith, *OSS: The Secret History of America's First Central Intelligence Agency*, 169.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 171-2.

Preparing the “Human-terrain” for the Allied Invasion of France

After months of vying to be recognized as equals in the intelligence community, the OSS finally got their wish when the British MI-6, charged with providing the British government with foreign intelligence, invited the Americans to join in a partnership with the SOE. The goal was to prepare for the Allied landing tentatively scheduled for 1 May 1944 and code-named Operation Overlord. Shortly thereafter, the OSS was brought into the planning portion of an operation that was known as Sussex, a mission that would insert fifty teams of British and American agents into France in order to prepare the battle-space with interconnecting links for communication and intelligence in advance of the conventional landing in northern France.

In order to limit the rivalries between members of both clandestine services, and to raise the prestige of the Americans, Donovan realized that he needed someone in his ranks who had the political pull and connections of a career soldier. That man was Colonel Joseph Haskell, who was the son of a general, a West Point graduate, and a former intelligence officer who had deep connections in the European theater command. By bringing him into the fold, the OSS simultaneously gained respect in London, while impressing the British with Haskell’s connections and character. As a consequence, the SOE offered the OSS’s Special Operations Branch an official merger, which created a joint unit under the dual command of Haskell and a British brigadier.¹⁵⁸

The first member of this joint effort was also the OSS’s most decorated agent, Peter Ortiz. Born in America to a Spanish-American mother and French-American father, his parents had sent him to France for his education. A quick learner, Ortiz spoke ten languages, and at the age of 19 in 1932, enlisted in the French Foreign Legion for service in North Africa, a location where his fluency in both French and Arabic would come in handy. By the end of his five-year

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 174.

enlistment, he had twice earned the Croix de Guerre in combat against the Rif, and subsequently returned to the United States until the beginning of World War II, when due to the United States' declared neutrality he reenlisted in the Foreign Legion as a Sergeant.

In May 1940, he was wounded and captured by the Nazis, but managed to escape and make his way back to the United States where he recuperated, while still looking for a way back into the fight. In June 1942, the United States Marine Corps proved to be just that way, and after demonstrating his advanced proficiency and competence at the enlisted boot camp, was sent to Quantico where he would be commissioned as a Lieutenant. Unlike the vast majority of his peers who found themselves in the Pacific, the Marine Corps realized that it was best to utilize Ortiz's unique skill set, and he was sent to Morocco where he helped organize and lead the Resistance before once again being wounded and sent back to the United States for rest and recovery.

Finally, in 1943, he was officially brought into the ranks of the OSS, the same group he had aided during his time in Tunisia, and in January 1944, he, along with a French Colonel and a British Captain, jumped into occupied France in order to organize, train, equip, and fight alongside the Resistance in the Haute-Savoie region, as well as aid in the rescue and escape of Allied aircrews shot down over France.¹⁵⁹

While his agents were being trained at British camps run by the SOE, Haskell was looking ahead at how best to utilize the Resistance in anticipation of the invasion of France. The answer came when Donovan informed him of the Jedburghs, or Jed teams for short. Given the code name for the town in England where they trained, the Jed teams were small units composed of an American or British officer, an officer of French nationality, and a British or American

¹⁵⁹ Laura Lacey and John W. Brunner, *Ortiz: To Live a Man's Life* (Williamstown, NJ: Phillips Publications, 2012)

enlisted radio operator.¹⁶⁰ Contrary to the SOE's and OSS's clandestine nature, they were to jump into France in uniform so as to offer legitimacy to any group they could assemble for when the time came to link up with the advancing Allies after Overlord was underway. In this capacity, their mission was to unite with the underground, equip and train the Maquis, increase patriotic morale so as to ensure that the local populace received the Allies with open arms, and "coordinate resistance activity with Allied military strategy."¹⁶¹

The hardest part of the task of finding the right personnel to deploy with the teams was finding the right French citizens for the task. The OSS was still insistent on avoiding as much of the political rivalry as they could, as they were justifiably concerned with personal discriminations affecting the Allied strategic aims. Unfortunately, this seemed more difficult than it was already believed to be, as most recent French immigrants who were not already being utilized by the clandestine services were steeped in political bias. Other candidates interviewed by the OSS refused to work with the British, and still others were more interested in joining the more visible units of de Gaulle's Free French conventional forces. Lastly, the BCRA were also concerned that many of those who were interviewed were "tainted with Vichyism," which is to say that the candidate was not as supportive of de Gaulle as they would have liked. It was finally agreed that the majority of the French agents would have to come from the BCRA.

Unfortunately, the increasing size of the Gaullist bureaucracy and the political rivalries which persisted at uncomfortable levels between Giraudists in North Africa and the Gaullists in London stalled the recruitment of the necessary Frenchmen until an agreement between American, British, and French conventional forces in preparation for Overlord was made, thus opening the

¹⁶⁰ Stafford, *Secret Agent: The True Story of the Covert War against Hitler*, 212.

¹⁶¹ Alsop and Braden, *Sub Rosa: The O.S.S. and American Espionage*, 136-183.

doors of diplomacy to the benefit of the clandestine services.¹⁶² The Jedburgh teams embodied this agreement, and would prove to be one of the few operations that worked smoothly on a basis of cooperation between the Allies due to the deliberate mix in ideologies and nationalities so that no effort could receive more attention than the one that mattered most: the liberation of France.¹⁶³

Finally, on 9 April 1944, the first OSS-directed French agents jumped into France and began sending their intelligence reports back to London over radios dropped in subsequent airdrops, complementing the supply-drops that had been a regular occurrence since January of 1944. Progress was also being made with the OSS's goal of separating the mission from politics despite the BCRA's claims that doing so was impossible, with military jargon being used in clever ways in order to express their avoidance of potential problems that might arise. For example, Richard Smith, author of *OSS* wrote:

[A benign message with hidden meaning] 'The Maquis invariably asked for more [arms] than they needed—anticipating future recruits and responding to the natural wish to build up a reserve—and we had to prune their requests to a size within our capacity to deliver and which, at the same time, would maintain their effectiveness.' Political translation: 'Many Allied officers, especially the British, feared that well-armed and competing resistance forces might use the occasion of the Allied landings to 'indulge themselves in a first-rate civil war.' Resistance forces already claimed 100 to 350 thousand adherents, a potentially violent element in a liberated France that might well be plagued by 'fundamentally political and social disequilibrium.'¹⁶⁴

Despite the problems in politics, in March 1944 de Gaulle created the Forces Françaises de l'Interieur (FFI), a supposedly united underground military that would include the Gaullist Armée Secrète and the Gaullist, Giraudist, and Communist Maquisards. Well aware that the French were in fact a long way from true unity, the Allies appreciated the effort to assuage their

¹⁶² Smith, *OSS: The Secret History of America's First Central Intelligence Agency*, 177-8.

¹⁶³ Sterling, *Secret Agent: The True Story of the Covert War against Hitler*, 213.

¹⁶⁴ Smith, *OSS: The Secret History of America's First Central Intelligence Agency*, 179-80.

fears while they continued work on Overlord.¹⁶⁵ Unfortunately, after a failed Giraudist plot to have a spy coordinate with the Abwehr (professional rivals with the Gestapo) and proceed with a mission to assassinate Hitler, Giraud was hastily relieved of his position, and his best agents were absorbed into Gaullist organizations to be used in the future. While this seemed to be a step toward complete unity, the French Communists were enraged to hear that de Gaulle had embraced the former agents of Giraud, denouncing the Gaullist movement as “a pack of cryptofascists whose real aim was to rivet the rule of the elite back onto a resuscitated capitalist republic.”¹⁶⁶

With all the troubles caused by the Communists at this tumultuous time, the OSS rejoiced at de Gaulle’s decision to send General Joseph Pierre Koenig as the military emissary to Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF). Officially, his job was to serve as the official commander of the FFI and to relay messages as the voice of the Resistance. Unofficially, his influence allowed him the ability to limit the Communist influence of the present underground. Taking extra measure to limit the Communists, he was also sure to use BCRA personnel as his staff, and as such, the OSS and SOE could continue their work in occupied France with those whose goal of a liberated France outweighed their desire to control the country when France was liberated.¹⁶⁷

Meanwhile, French agents, as part of the Sussex units, were being brought up to speed with the actions of the Maquisards that they were charged with training, equipping, and fighting alongside. During a brief orientation after jumping into southern France, Free French agent Serge Vaculik was shown the chores he would be tasked with completing on a daily basis as part of his cover, as well as the field where air drops would be received, and an example of the

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 180.

¹⁶⁶ M.R.D. Foot, *SOE in France: An Account of the Work of the British Special Operations Executive in France 1940-1944* (London: Whitehall History Publishing, 2000), 359.

¹⁶⁷ Smith, *OSS: The Secret History of America's First Central Intelligence Agency*, 182.

sabotage that the Maquis had executed a few days earlier: the cutting of German telegraph posts.¹⁶⁸

As D-Day approached, the SOE, OSS, Koenig, and Passy agreed to a BBC transmission of coded messages for an uprising of the Resistance. That would be the only clue as to the fact that the invasion was set to begin, as even de Gaulle himself was unaware of the location and time that Overlord was to commence, demonstrating that while relations were at times manageable, trust was never easy to muster between the many services of the British, French, and Americans. When the consequences were at their greatest, the French were rarely kept informed.

Operation Overlord and the Resistance in Action

“As we progressed...Donovan and I came to a halt in the lee of a hedgerow that was being subjected to intermittent German machine-gun fire. Flattened out, the general turned to me and said: ‘David, you mustn’t be captured, we know too much.’ ‘Yes, Sir,’ I answered mechanically. ‘Have you your pill?’ he demanded. I confessed I was not carrying the instantaneous death pellet concocted by our scientific advisor... ‘Never mind,’ replied the resourceful general, ‘I have two of them.’ Thereupon, still lying prone, he disgorged the contents of his pockets. There were a number of hotel keys, a passport, currency of several nationalities, photographs of grandchildren, travel orders, newspaper clippings, and heaven knows what else, but no pills... ‘If we get out of here you must send a message to Gibbs, the Hall Porter at Claridges in London, telling him on no account to allow the servants in the hotel to touch some dangerous medicines in my bathroom.’...Donovan [then] whispered to me: ‘I must shoot first.’ ‘Yes sir,’ I responded, ‘but can we do much against machine-guns with our pistols?’ ‘Oh, you don’t understand...I mean if we are about to be captured I’ll shoot you first. After all, I am your Commanding Officer.’”

-Captain David Bruce, the man who brought Virginia Hall into the OSS, reflecting his experience with Colonel Donovan at the beaches of Normandy

¹⁶⁸ Vaculik, *Air Commando*, 256.

While conventional troops were slogging ashore in Normandy on 6 June 1944, agents like Jacques Voyer, a Frenchman who had jumped into France in April, were continuing what they had done for the past two months: sending countless reports of German troop movements and potential targets while repeatedly risking detection by running through fields to collect equipment to be used by the Resistance. Unfortunately, just as many in his position would find themselves, he was halted by two Nazi officers on 10 June while riding a motorcycle and making mental note of the direction of travel and strength of a German convoy. After eight days of torture, he finally succumbed to his wounds having divulged nothing of his mission, and was buried in a forgettable field with the Cross of Lorraine pinned to his chest by fellow members of the Resistance.¹⁶⁹

Captain David Bruce was in charge of coordinating with French Sussex agents such as Voyer, as well as Jedburghs and other agents working alongside the Resistance in their coordinated effort to report on, delay, ambush, and generally harass the German forces. Coordinating between conventional military units in an invasion was difficult enough; coordination between men and women with the understandable desire to remain undiscovered was nearly impossible, and as such, the first few days after the invasion were not without its mistakes. One such mistake embodied both the difficulty of intelligence gathering and dry British humor when Jedburgh officer Bernard Knox was assured by the OSS that the area he would parachute into had no German forces for miles. After the fact, Knox remarked that “There was, as always, something wrong with the briefing; we landed right in the middle of the German Second Parachute Division [and] had a very hectic time running away from them.”¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ Smith, *OSS: The Secret History of America's First Central Intelligence Agency*, 186.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 186.

Unfortunately, not every administrative mistake was met with the same wit and avoidance of tragedy. In the Vercors region of southeastern France, four hundred miles of dense woods proved to be the perfect location for a sizeable Maquis force to organize, and had been used as such since the initiation of the STO laws in the fall of 1943. By D-Day, 3,500 Maquis and their OSS and SOE counterparts were there in force, ready to execute the plan they thought had been approved by London weeks earlier. The plan, as noted by one of the leaders in the Vercors, Pierre Dalloz, embodied the increasingly offensive nature in the Maquis' tactics, rather than the comparatively small, though no less daring acts of sabotage they had grown accustomed to:

It was not merely a question of confronting a fully armed enemy, but rather of throwing him into greater disorder by attacking. Nor was it a matter of digging in the Vercors. Rather, we were to install ourselves there by stealth with the object of sallying forth to attack. This would not be a holding operation; instead, we were to push forward in every direction. The static exterior should not deceive us. Far from being frozen, the positions taken up could suddenly flame into explosive action.¹⁷¹

However, the operational proposal had been lost in the bureaucracy of London, so after extended attacks on the Germans due to the Maquisards' belief that they would be reinforced in little time, the only new occurrence in the fighting was a concerted effort by the Germans to destroy the Maquis of Vercors, rather than the increasingly necessary reinforcements the Maquis had hoped for. Instead, all the Maquis received was fifteen more men for the purpose of passing the recommendation that they should introduce more guerrilla tactics because they had been unaware of the requested Airborne Division all along. After standing firm in the first wave of attacks on 13 June, the Maquis realized it was too late to change their strategy, and requested a drop consisting of mortars and heavy weapons. Once again disappointed, they only got more

¹⁷¹ Chambard, *The Maquis: A History of the French Resistance Movement*, 174-5.

small arms and ammunition, which was of little use when their numbers were decreasing by the day.¹⁷²

On 14 July 1944, Bastille Day, the temporarily reinvigorated Maquis proclaimed that the Vercors was officially a Free Republic, but their enthusiasm was cut short by strafing runs from German airplanes followed by an attack of 22,000 German soldiers. Finally, on 23 July, the Germans were able to break the lines of the Maquis, and the Nazis shifted the focus of their aggression from the now decimated Maquisards to the citizens who lived nearby, burning hospitals, leveling the villages, and killing every French citizen, regardless of age or gender, and hanging their bodies from meat hooks in butcher shops and from nooses along bridges to serve as a warning to anyone who saw the aftermath of what would happen if the Germans were crossed.¹⁷³

This brutality, so prevalent late in the war, was a symptom of the mechanism that the Wehrmacht had created, allowing the increasingly brutal treatment experienced by the Nazi troops at the hand of their superiors to be inflicted on their enemies whenever they got the chance, thus permitting “the increasingly brutalized troops to direct their anger and frustration at targets other than their superiors and then tied them to each other with terror of the enemy’s vengeance in case of defeat,” which at this point was all but inevitable.¹⁷⁴

Despite such a setback, the Resistance had proven its worth to General Eisenhower, who decided to unite Koenig’s BCRA staff with the American and British Special Force Headquarters, a move that would also streamline the bureaucracy that was paid for in the blood of the people and Maquis of the Vercors. Meanwhile, the Jed teams and other agents working with the Maquis were making great strides in their mission, and anything that aided that mission

¹⁷² Smith, *OSS: The Secret History of America's First Central Intelligence Agency*, 186-8.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 186-8.

¹⁷⁴ Bartov, *Germany's War and the Holocaust: Disputed Histories*, 16.

was a good idea to them, though they were too busy with their own work to worry about the events occurring in London.

These Jedburgh agents had quickly become immersed in their work, becoming “kings of their particular castles. They were men of position and power in their neighborhoods, had money to spend and lived well from sources so hidden that even scavenging Nazis could not locate the supply.” Furthermore, money that was stolen from Vichy banks was everywhere, allowing them free rein to do as they saw fit in the name of liberation. In many cases, agents identified themselves as members of the community they were temporarily a part of, and in turn, they took care of them just as they were taken care of by the village. Accordingly, Agents often acted in the direct defense of the village, with no regard for the Allied objectives beyond ensuring the village’s prosperity. One such example was the time that German soldiers were stealing horses from a village, only to be stopped by the local Maquis due to the hasty actions of Free French Agent Serge Vaculik, who risked his own security due to increasing loyalties to the people he lived with despite the fact that the horses had nothing to do with the reason he was there. After all, one must not forget that while the agents were well-trained and consummate professionals, they were also humans, and each one had an inclination to do what he thought was right when a situation arose that compromised the security of the people he cared about.¹⁷⁵

However, it was not uncommon for ideological differences to get in the way of the principal mission. Stewart Alsop discovered this after completing a jump with the task of aiding a Communist FTP Maquis unit. While he had no problem at all with it, his French counterpart was a devoted Gaullist whose severe dislike for the Communists prompted him to suggest that they help the FFI partisans instead. Before this event, Alsop believed that the Maquis were a united front, when in fact, it was only the Allies’ insistence to avoid such politically charged

¹⁷⁵ Vaculik, *Air Commando*, 271-73.

Maquis groups unless they were in a strategically important area that made it seem that way.

Avoiding these groups was seen as a tactical and strategic advantage as well as a wise decision to avoid unnecessary friction, as OSS agent Serge Obolensky recalled:

The Maquis varied greatly: the conservatives were well-informed, very responsible, and good soldiers; others, most of these in leftist groups, were trigger-happy, cocky, and foolish. So there were really two lines in the French underground, one serious and disciplined, but inclined to lack initiative; the other reckless, dangerous, and veering over to the complete dominance of the Reds.¹⁷⁶

This assessment of the Communists, while shared by many, was not unique to the FTP, as Gaullist groups were also inclined to ambush Germans for no tactical or strategic reason, and later in the war, when victory seemed assured, took it upon themselves to target collaborationists, many of them merely patronizing Vichy officials or German soldiers as a means to provide for their family. The most infamous recipients of these acts of humiliation were prostitutes whose only crime was making money from lonely German soldiers.

However, the Communists had a characteristic of revolution that the conservatives and Gaullists inherently lacked. To many of the Communists, resistance was romantic, and as the ideology attracted youthful, enthusiastic, and all too often naïve French citizens, they were a fickle group to work with because they either exuded boldness that teetered towards stupidity, or they merely fled in the face of actual combat because the reality of war was often far more overwhelming than a loyalty to an ideology. Captain Geoffrey Jones corroborated this belief when he retold the story of his unit of 150 FTP Communists:

Out in the middle of nowhere on this mountain, early in my stay, one morning they had a formation to honor me. They all drew themselves up and sang the “Internationale” and then they sang the “Marseillaise.” They were really carried away with the idea of being Communists. They called each other “Comrade” and had a political commissar for each of the three battalions... Later when I took them into a small action, and the guns started going off, I looked around and I only had two left! Not that I blame them... They really

¹⁷⁶ Serge Obolensky, *One Man in His Time* (New York: McDowell-Obolensky, 1958), 387-8.

didn't get much military training... They seemed to think it was more romantic just to live up there on the mountaintop and call each other "Comrade."¹⁷⁷

Despite the early difficulties, Jones still held no ill-will towards his Maquis, noting that the majority of them would prove themselves time and time again in combat, and that "These were the kind of people that are worth respecting and to hell with the ones who were busy denouncing each other in order to get political power."¹⁷⁸ Indeed, pre-war conservative political rhetoric likely conditioned the FTP's questionable reputation more than they deserved, but once the accusation or experience of banditry was investigated in any region, a negative reputation was sure to follow, and unfortunately for the FTP, the actions of the few bandit-units and the political-leanings of the Allies resulted in many of their units simply being avoided unless strategically exploitable, and even then, they were careful to limit the supplies they provided due to the fear of inter-partisan warfare that might take place after the liberation of France.¹⁷⁹

As Vichy recognized the end of its reign and as the Nazis tried fruitlessly to hold their positions being attacked by the Allies, reprisals were swiftly inflicted on all acts of resistance, which was seen as terrorism. Three days after Overlord commenced, the SS Division Das Reich randomly seized both men and boys in the town of Tulle and hung ninety-nine of them from the balconies of their homes. Another regiment of the SS on 10 June stormed into the village of Oradour-sur-Glane, believing that it contained a cache of arms to be used by the Maquis. By the end of the day, 642 people were killed, and the entire village razed to the ground.¹⁸⁰

Similar events occurred whenever a Maquis unit attempted to stand up against the Nazis rather than continue with their acts of well-prepared sabotage or opportunistic ambushes in isolated locations so as to limit the threat of reprisals. However, the enthusiasm of the Resistance

¹⁷⁷ Robert Adleman and George Walton, *The Champagne Campaign* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969), 58-59.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 189.

¹⁷⁹ Rod Kedward. "France at War: Vichy and the Historians." *Rural France and Resistance*, Edited by Sarah Fishman, Laura Downs, Ioannis Sinanoglou, Leonard Smith, and Robert Zaretsky. (New York: Berg, 2000), 128.

¹⁸⁰ Kedward. *La Vie en Bleu: France and the French since 1900*. 300-1.

was difficult for even the most seasoned Agent to temper after the Allied invasion, especially due to the fact that once Allied victory seemed assured, the numbers within the Resistance groups swelled with people looking to garner the respect earned by men and women who had committed to the cause years earlier. This massive increase in members made them nearly impossible to account for, especially since many French men and women had four years of pent up frustration that many desired to let out at their first opportunity.

This time of turmoil “had elements of civil war,” as members of Vichy and the Maquis spared nothing in their efforts to destroy each other. Indeed, there is evidence that the aforementioned “bandit-Maquis” who raided food stores and murdered those whom they perceived as collaborators caused a rift in public opinion. However, due to how tightly interwoven society was to various elements of the Resistance, the Milice and devout collaborators were such a minority at this point in the war that the threat of civil war was at no time comparable to that of Spain in the 1930s.

This is not to say that the entire country rallied behind or joined the Resistance, as many people realized that the Maquis’ increasingly bold attacks on the Nazis exposed their entire village to reprisals. With this in mind, many people were eager to leave their villages whenever a Maquis unit was nearby, thus removing an important element that made the Maquis successful in the first place: fellow countrymen willing to risk their lives to hide, feed, and supply them. Instead, there was growing anger against the Resistance in areas where the Maquis were perceived to be too bold and reckless because their actions often had very little strategic impact while endangering the entire local populace. However, while many citizens had grown tired of

the Maquisards' antics, there were at least as many looking to join them due to both the German atrocities, and the romance of resistance now that the Allies appeared to soon be victorious.¹⁸¹

Indeed, much like how reality is contrary to today's popular sentiment that World War II was an exercise in good versus evil, the situation in France on the dawn of liberation was as convoluted as the many layers of the alliance between the Allied clandestine services and their relationship with France in their common goals of liberation and victory.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 301.

Conclusion

The legacy of the Resistance belies the popular belief fostered by Charles de Gaulle in the summer of 1944: that of a France united under the banner of liberation. Indeed, the reality in France during the war was that of a population that was generally just trying to survive, and if that meant exchanging pleasantries with a German soldier, then many did just that. Politically, the Nazi occupation was not the magical ointment that would cure internal divisions either, as the rift between conservatives and Communists that existed before the war persisted through it. Likewise, just as this rivalry prevented an adequate defense of France before the war, it obstructed a truly unified Resistance during the war even after the polarizing STO laws of 1943 forced thousands of them into the maquis ready to resist.

Therefore, despite the unwavering commitment of the Allied clandestine services and the countless acts of bravery on the part of individual members of the Resistance, the coordinated effort of the two elements in support of Operation Overlord was not as transformative as both groups had hoped. One reason for this is that command rivalries between de Gaulle and the Allies made it difficult to attach French agents to the Jedburghs, and as a result the teams did not parachute into France until April 1944. Consequently, the Jed teams had a mere two months to organize, equip, and train their respective Maquis units which left these units very little time either to gather actionable intelligence that could be sent back to London and used in advance of the invasion, or to perform such acts of sabotage and subversion on the Germans as to prevent an organized reinforcement in response to the landing on Normandy. However, while the political infighting limited the Resistance's effect in aiding the Allied invasion, it did undermine the legitimacy of Vichy by demonstrating that there was a large minority within France willing to fight a fascist regime, thereby demonstrating that Vichy was not a viable post-war French state.

In order to mitigate the contention within France and maximize the effect of the Resistance upon the war effort, the Allied clandestine services made a concerted effort to avoid giving complete allegiance to one partisan group at the risk of alienating the other. For similar reasons, they were wary of dedicating their entire effort to de Gaulle's Free French because if the people of France rejected de Gaulle's authority, the British and Americans would have little opportunity to influence the post-war French state. This, they feared, would create a greater chance at instability in a post-war French state. However, when it became clear that de Gaulle was being largely accepted as the leader of the Resistance, thanks to the influence of Jean Moulin, it became as foolish for the British and Americans to ignore him in favor of the numerically superior Communists, as it would be to embrace him unequivocally. Therefore, when the Maquis' numbers expanded noticeably in 1943, the Allies found in the Maquisards their generally apolitical candidates for aid in resistance, because just as the clandestine services were not very concerned with issues beyond France's liberation, so too were the majority of the Maquis.

In the end, it proved impossible for the British and American clandestine organizations to avoid working entirely with the politically motivated Gaullist and Communist-inspired units of the Maquis, or the Resistance in general. However, the discretion used in selecting the units that would receive the bulk of arms and training helped reduce the number of heroic but largely ineffectual attacks favored by either the Gaullists or the Communists, which had little positive effect on the Allied invasion plans. Instead, the majority of the Maquis did precisely what they were trained and tasked to do: harass and impede the daily operations of the Nazis, and delay their ability to reinforce the units under attack by the invading Allied forces. The wariness that was characteristic of these operations also limited the chances of reprisals on neighboring towns,

something that concentrated attacks on large troop formations did little to avoid. Had the infighting back in London been alleviated and if agents had been allowed to enter France in February as originally proposed, the Maquis could have had a far greater impact on preparing France for the Allied invasion.

Furthermore, while America and the British were certainly wary of Communism, they avoided working with the FTP whenever they could not because of their domestic politics, but because the politics that were so embedded into the Communist units conflicted with the consensus of French leadership in London. If instead of Charles de Gaulle, a Communist of equal influence and status had arrived in London in 1940, then it could have very well have been the Gaullists instead of the Communists who would have been looked upon with skepticism. Nevertheless, in terms of fighting prowess, the Communists were just as fierce as their Gaullist and apolitical counterparts. Also like the Gaullists, the Communists were detrimental to themselves and the mission due to their enthusiasm in many instances, and even had, on occasion, examples of outright cowardice. Little of this was a symptom of any groups' politics; rather, it was a result of their training, leadership, and experience, or lack thereof. Accordingly, the OSS and the SOE attempted to control what they could, and if avoiding one group limited the variables that could result in the failure of a mission, that decision was the one chosen. In doing so, the Allied clandestine services created a reality for themselves that did not exist in France: a dichotomy of friend and foe, Allies and Axis, and victory and defeat, and left the issue of post-war France for others to decide later on.

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